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MACAULAY'S LIFE OF JOHNSON

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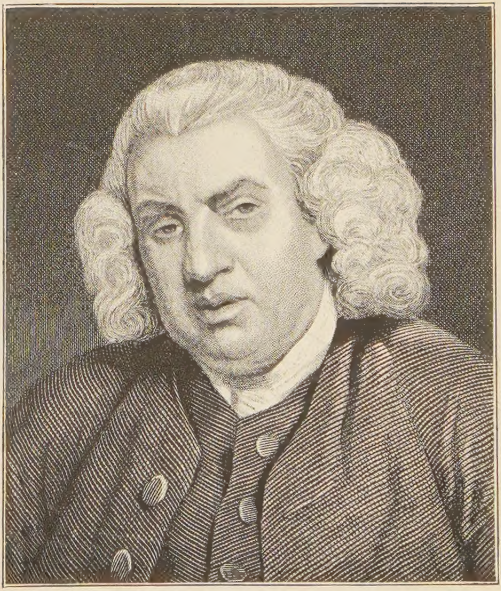

Sam. Johnson.

GATEWAY SERIES

LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

BY

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

EDITED BY

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Life of Samuel Johnson

PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

THIS series of books aims, first, to give the English texts required for entrance to college in a form which shall make them clear, interesting, and helpful to those who are beginning the study of literature; and, second, to supply the knowledge which the student needs to pass the entrance examination. For these two reasons it is called *The Gateway Series.*

The poems, plays, essays, and stories in these small volumes are treated, first of all, as works of literature, which were written to be read and enjoyed, not to be parsed and scanned and pulled to pieces. A short life of the author is given, and a portrait, in order to help the student to know the real person who wrote the book. The introduction tells what it is about, and how it was written, and where the author got the idea, and what it means. The notes at the foot of the page are simply to give the sense of the hard words so that the student can read straight on without turning to a dictionary. The other notes, at the end of the book, explain difficulties and allusions and fine points.

The editors are chosen because of their thorough training and special fitness to deal with the books committed to them, and because they agree with this idea of what a Gateway Series ought to be. They express, in each case, their own views of the books which they edit. Simplicity, thoroughness, shortness, and clearness, — these, we hope, will be the marks of the series.

HENRY VAN DYKE.

PREFATORY NOTE

If this little volume has any distinctive character, and therefore any reason for existing, it will be found in the fact that, in addition to the ordinary notes in explanation of the various literary, historical, and other allusions in Macaulay's essay, the editor has called attention continually and specifically to the illustrations of Macaulay's distinctive traits of style and manner. It is hoped that by this means the great master of modern English prose may become to the young reader, not a mere name, but a living spirit. In order to interest the reader in Trevelyan's fascinating volumes, it has been thought wise to write the Introduction largely in Macaulay's own words and in those of his biographer.

J. S. CLARK.

Evanston, Ill.

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INTRODUCTION

Biography

Thomas Babington Macaulay was born at Rothley Temple, in Leicestershire, on the 25th day of October, 1800. His father, Zachary Macaulay, was an intimate friend of the famous philanthropist, William Wilberforce, and gave both his life and his means to the cause of the abolition of slavery in the British colonies. During seven years, before his marriage in 1799, the elder Macaulay was governor of a colony of liberated slaves at Sierra Leone, Africa. For two years after the birth of his son, Zachary Macaulay lived in cramped quarters in Birchin Lane, near the London office of the Sierra Leone Company; the family then removed to a commodious house in High Street, Clapham, where the boy passed a happy childhood, reading incessantly from the time that he was three years old, "for the most part lying on the rug before the fire, with his book on the ground, and a piece of bread-and-butter in his hand." His nephew and biographer, Sir George Trevelyan, tells us that "he did not care for toys, but was very fond of taking his walk, when he would hold forth to his companion, whether nurse or mother, telling

interminable stories out of his own head, or repeating what he had been reading, in language far above his years. His memory retained without effort the phraseology of the book which he had been last engaged on." Many stories are told of the child's droll precocity. Once, when a servant-maid had spilled some hot coffee, by accident, upon the legs of the four-year-old boy, he replied to the solicitous inquiry of his hostess, "Thank you, madam, the agony is abated."

Although Macaulay was very prolific in his mature years, it has been said that his fourth to his eighth years were those of "his greatest literary activity." When he was seven he wrote a "compendium of universal history," filling a quire of paper with an account of the most prominent events from the Creation down to the present time. Soon afterward he wrote a paper which he proposed to have translated into Malabar in order "to persuade the people of Travancore to embrace the Christian religion." Then, after memorizing all of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* and most of *Marmion*, he determined to write a poem in six cantos, to be called *The Battle of Cheviot*, and actually produced three cantos of about one hundred and twenty lines each, in two days. Then followed two long heroic poems and endless hymns, celebrating the deeds of many ancient and modern heroes and not omitting reference to the saintly endeavours of his father in behalf of the wretched Africans. His biographer tells us that "the voluminous writings of his childhood, dashed

off at headlong speed in the odds and ends of leisure from school study and nursery routine, are not only perfectly correct in spelling and grammar, but display the same lucidity of meaning and scrupulous accuracy in punctuation and the other minor details of the literary art which characterize his mature works."

And yet this marvel of precocity was not spoiled. His parents wisely refrained from ever expressing a consciousness that their boy was superior to other children, and there is abundant testimony that he was a simple, natural child, free from affectation and conceit. One consequence of this careful ignoring of his superiority as a child was that, in after life, Macaulay habitually overestimated the acquirements of others. He systematically assumed that their reading and their powers of memory were equal to his own.

During his childhood and early boyhood he was a frequent visitor at the home of Hannah More, who was a neighbour and an intimate friend of the family and who took a warm interest in the precocious child, and gave much time to the direction of his general reading. The family circumstances at this period were easy, as the elder Macaulay received a good salary as secretary of the Sierra Leone Company. When the son reached his twelfth year, his parents seriously considered sending him to one of the great public schools, but were finally influenced by their intense evangelical views to send him to a private school kept by the Rev. Mr. Preston at the village of Little Shelford, near Cam-

bridge. Here he was compelled to listen to long sermons from a tutor of very narrow mind; but Macaulay seems to have escaped the reaction natural to most healthy boys from such a régime. At Shelford Macaulay came strongly under the influence of the neighbouring university, and imbibed some of the spirit that pervaded Cambridge at that time. He received much notice, especially from Dean Milner, then president of Queen's College, who recognized the great promise of the boy, and frequently entertained him at his college residence on "terms of friendship and almost of equality." The dean once wrote to Macaulay's father this prophetic sentence: "Your lad is a fine fellow; he shall stand before kings." While at Shelford the boy read a vast amount of literature, preferring poetry and prose fiction, often of the lighter sort, though he once boasted of having memorized both *Paradise Lost* and the *Pilgrim's Progress*. He seemed to remember everything he read, and early manifested a remarkable power of taking in at a glance the substance of a printed page.

Macaulay's interest in current history, and the fact that he had an old head on young shoulders, appear in a characteristic letter to his mother, written in his fourteenth year, on hearing of the repulse of Napoleon. He writes: "My Dear Mama, — The news is glorious indeed. Peace! peace with a Bourbon, with a descendant of Henri Quatre, with a prince who is bound to us by all the ties of gratitude! I have some hopes that it

will be a lasting peace, that the troubles of the last twenty years may make kings and nations wiser."

When Mr. Preston had been Macaulay's instructor for two years, the school was removed to Aspenden Hall, near Buntingford in Hertfordshire, where the boy spent "four most industrious years, doing less and less in the class room as time went on," but attaining reasonable proficiency in Greek and Latin. His inherent fondness for discussion had already become manifest, as appears from the fact that his instructor found it wise to assign him a room next his own, in order to discourage an excess of sociability between Macaulay and his fellow-pupils. During this school period he composed little aside from the assigned exercises, and these he performed in the most perfunctory manner. He continued to read books faster than other people skim them, and was fairly popular among his schoolfellows, in spite of the fact that he was totally unable to play at any sort of game. His vacations were spent in travel with his family, often visiting the homes of those clergymen with whom the elder Macaulay fraternized, where the son, as he afterward complained, "always came in for very long prayers and expositions." The father was as precise in his manners as in his religion, "very accurate and calm, detesting strong expressions and remarkably self-controlled — while his eager, impetuous boy, careless of his dress, always forgetting to wash his hands and brush his hair, writing an execrable hand and folding his letters with a great blotch for a seal, was a con-

stant care and irritation." Even while in school the son began to manifest distinct leanings toward the liberal side in politics, much to the chagrin of his ultra-conservative father, who, with Wilberforce and the other English abolitionists, held an incongruous position in labouring for reform while rigidly adhering to that party which was against reform.

In October 1818, Macaulay entered Trinity College, Cambridge. The room in Old Court between the Gate and the Chapel, which he occupied during most of his undergraduate days, is still pointed out. His general attitude toward the college curriculum is illustrated in his nephew's observation that "two hours were much the same as one to Macaulay, in whose eyes algebra and geometry were so much additional material for lively and interminable argument. . . . He regarded every successive mathematical proposition as an open question."

From the beginning of his residence there, Macaulay evinced an intense loyalty to the scenes and surroundings of Trinity College. "To the last, he regarded it as an ancient Greek or a mediæval Italian felt toward his native city. As long as he had place and standing there, he never left it willingly or returned to it without delight." Among his contemporaries at Trinity were Praed, Derwent Coleridge, Moultrie, and Charles Austin. With such companions the young man delighted to spend the night in argument and companionship. "Unfailing in his attendance at lecture and

chapel, blameless with regard to college laws and college discipline, it was well for his virtue that no curfew was in force within the precincts of Trinity. He never tired of recalling the days when he supped at midnight on milk punch and roast turkey, drank tea in floods at an hour when older men are intent upon any thing rather than on the means of keeping themselves awake, and made little of sitting over the fire till the bell rang for morning chapel, in order to see a friend off by the early coach."

Macaulay's powers as a conversationalist had then reached their zenith. A story is told of his visiting at a friend's house during vacation, in company with his crony, Charles Austin. After breakfast the two young Cantabs became engaged in argument, which was carried on with so much vivacity and such wealth of information that the whole company sat entranced about them through the day, till it was time to dress for dinner. While Macaulay shunned mathematics and scientific studies, he found vent for his argumentative powers in the Cambridge Union, a debating society, although the conservative college officers limited political debates to public affairs anterior to the century. While an undergraduate, he excelled in declamation, though he failed to secure a prize in this field because of an apparent partiality shown by the senior dean to a relative. But he won a prize for Latin declamation, and, in 1821, he "established his classical repute by winning a Craven university scholarship." We are told that he detested

the labour of manufacturing Greek and Latin verse in cold blood as an exercise, and that, in his third year at Trinity, he wrote: "I never practised composition a single hour since I have been at Cambridge." His maxim was "soak your mind with Cicero," and he so faithfully followed this injunction that, in 1824, he won what he considered the proudest honour that Cambridge had to give; for, by maintaining a high grade in the fellowship examinations of that year, he became a fellow — "one of the sixty masters of an ancient and splendid establishment." His fellowship assured to him for the ensuing seven years "three hundred pounds a year, a stable for his horse, six dozen of audit ale every Christmas, a loaf and two pats of butter every morning, and a good dinner for nothing, with as many almonds and raisins as he could eat at dessert."

It is a significant fact that he was not chosen a fellow until his third trial, nominally for the surprising reason that his translations from the Greek and Latin, while faithfully representing the originals, were in English that was "ungracefully bald and inornate." To those who know what Macaulay's style really is, this nominal reason is amusing. The real reason for so long withholding the coveted honour from the gifted youth was doubtless his neglect of those scientific and mathematical studies that have for centuries been insisted upon so strenuously at Cambridge. It was this neglect that caused his name to be omitted from the tripos of 1822, thus denying to him the highest honour in the gift

of the university. His stern father was so angered by this failure that Macaulay's favourite sister, afterward Lady Trevelyan, calls the ensuing scene "that first trial of my life." In his later years he used to express deep regret for his early neglect of scientific studies. He once wrote to a friend: "I would not give a half-penny to add to the consideration which I enjoy all the consideration that I should derive from having been senior wrangler. But I often regret, and even acutely, my want of a senior wrangler's knowledge of physics and mathematics; and I regret still more some habits of mind which a senior wrangler is pretty certain to possess."

Meantime Zachary Macaulay had become so engrossed in the great anti-slavery struggle as to neglect his private business, with the result that, as early as 1822, the family fortunes began to decline, and Macaulay in that year took two pupils. In return for teaching each of them an hour a day, he was to receive a hundred guineas. Under these circumstances, it will be seen how welcome was the annuity of three hundred pounds and other perquisites from his fellowship. For several years he was the main support of the family, and ultimately he paid off the debts of his father, who had been forced into bankruptcy.

He continued in residence at Cambridge during 1824 and 1825, taking more pupils, studying law, and contributing to Knight's *Quarterly Magazine* several articles, including his now famous poems *Ivry* and *Naseby*

and the equally famous imaginary conversation between Cowley and Milton. He was called to the bar in 1826, joined the Northern Circuit at Leeds, and travelled the circuit for several months without obtaining any clients. Meantime he had attracted attention by a speech at an anti-slavery meeting in June, 1824, and had soon afterward been asked to write for *The Edinburgh Review*. In August, 1825, he contributed to that periodical his essay on Milton, and thus, at one step, he won recognition as a master of prose style. He at once became a social lion, and "his father groaned in spirit over the conviction that thenceforward the law would be less to him than ever." But the father's sorrow was not unmitigated. The great Wilberforce followed young Macaulay as a speaker at the anti-slavery meeting mentioned above. Turning to Zachary Macaulay, his intimate friend and co-worker in the long anti-slavery struggle, — a struggle in which each had won many scars, — Wilberforce said: "My friend would doubtless willingly bear with all the base falsehoods, all the vile calumnies, all the detestable artifices which have been aimed against him, to render him the martyr and victim of our cause, for the gratification he has this day enjoyed in hearing one so dear to him plead such a cause in such a manner."

Macaulay's publication of his essay on Milton in *The Edinburgh Review* was the beginning of a memorable literary connexion. For a long term of years he remained the most eminent contributor to that great peri-

odical, though at first his rank was disputed by Lord Brougham, who assumed to be a kind of dictator in things both literary and political at that time, and who was viciously jealous of Macaulay, circumventing his literary and political advancement in every way possible. But even the great Brougham could not suppress a genius. And so we find, in successive numbers of the *Review*, the classic essays that now make up three volumes.

But literary and political fame was not Macaulay's only return from *The Edinburgh Review*. When he had been a contributor to its columns for only four years, his annual receipts from this source amounted to nearly three hundred pounds. This, with the equal amount from his fellowship, enabled him comfortably to support his father's large family. His personal appearance at the dawn of his fame is of interest. His friend Praed thus describes him in 1825: "There came up a short, manly figure, marvellously upright, with a bad neckcloth, and one hand in his waistcoat pocket. Of regular beauty he had little to boast; but in faces where there is an expression of great power or of great good humour, or both, you do not regret its absence."

But Macaulay had other deficiencies besides his lack of physical attractiveness. We are told that he was utterly destitute of bodily accomplishments. "He could neither swim nor row nor drive nor skate nor shoot. He seldom crossed a saddle, and never willingly." Yet he was not lacking in pugnacity, although, as his nephew

says, he reserved it "for quarrels undertaken on public grounds and fought out with the world looking on as umpire. . . . As a young man he sometimes deserved the praise which Dr. Johnson pronounced upon a good hater. He had no mercy for bad writers, and notably for bad poets, unless they were in want of money; in which case he became, within his means, the most open-handed of patrons."

In 1823, while Macaulay was still at Cambridge, his family, because of his father's declining fortunes, removed from Cadogan Place, in London, where they had lived in comparative luxury since 1818, to a less fashionable quarter in Great Ormond Street, not far from the British Museum. His letters and those of his sister give a very attractive picture of the home life at this period. To the gifted brother and his brilliant sister the great names of history were reincarnated, so that the young people talked about famous men and women as if they were their personal friends and living acquaintances. But they did not confine themselves to the company of dead worthies. Trevelyan tells us that "the fun that went on in Great Ormond Street was of a jovial and sometimes uproarious description. Even when the family was by itself, the schoolroom and the drawing-room were full of young people; and friends and cousins flocked in numbers to a resort where so much merriment was perpetually on foot." The young lawyer was the soul and centre of these gatherings. His favourite amusement was that of "capping verses."

This game, perhaps not well known to all young Americans, consists in quickly adding to a verse made or quoted by the leader another beginning with the last letter of the verse already given, or rhyming with it. As may readily be imagined, Macaulay easily surpassed all his competitors in such a game.

In 1828 he was made a Commissioner of Bankruptcy, an office that he held for four years. It added to his income from his fellowship and his writings about one thousand pounds per annum. In 1830 he was offered by Lord Lansdowne a seat in Parliament representing Calne, and promptly accepted. This was just at the crisis of the great reform movement in England. "And so, on the eve of the most momentous conflict that was ever fought out by speech and vote within the walls of a senate-house, the young recruit went gaily to his post in the ranks of that party whose coming fortunes he was prepared loyally to follow, and the history of whose past he was destined eloquently and perhaps imperishably to record."

Meantime he spent long days and nights in his chambers in Gray's Inn, within a few minutes' walk of his home, turning out in rapid succession his brilliant series of biographical essays for *The Edinburgh Review*, writing no less than thirteen of these within four years, besides giving much time to his parliamentary work and to his duties as a Commissioner of Bankruptcy. In 1831 he wrote to his sister, "I have not been once in bed till three in the morning since last

Tuesday," and two months earlier he had reported, "I mustered industry enough to teach myself Italian." This was in the most strenuous days of the reform movement, when he was so faithful in attendance at the nightly sessions of the House of Commons that his regularity became proverbial. It would seem that a man leading such a life would find it necessary to deny himself much social enjoyment, but his biographer tells us that "for the space of three seasons, he dined out almost nightly." He was on intimate terms with Sydney Smith and with the poet Rogers, who was just then recognized as the leading literary man of his day in England. The famous and eccentric Lady Holland lionized Macaulay, and his social was as great as his political popularity. But neither kind of success was sufficient to turn the young man's head; for he writes to his sister, after breakfasting, by invitation, at Holland House, with all its traditional glory: "The great use of going to these fine places is to learn how happy it is possible to be without them." One incident of a visit at Holland House deserves mention here because of its direct application to the purpose of this little book. Lady Holland, who prided herself on being a critic of the purity of the English language, had objected to the word *talented*. In speaking of the discussion, Macaulay said: "We talked about the word *talents* and its history. I said that it had first appeared in theological writing, that it was a metaphor taken from the parable in the New Testament, and that it had gradu-

ally passed from the vocabulary of divinity into common use. . . . She seemed surprised by this theory, never having, so far as I could judge, heard of the parable of the talents. I did not tell her, though I might have done so, that a person who professes to be a critic in the delicacies of the English language ought to have the Bible at his fingers' ends."

Meantime the wide attention attracted by Macaulay's brilliant series of essays in *The Edinburgh Review* had brought down upon his head what befell every successful contributor to that periodical at that time — the abuse of *Blackwood's Magazine*, then edited by that eccentric character, Professor Wilson, alias "Christopher North." This editor referred to Macaulay, in characteristic phrase, as "a little, splay-footed, ugly dumpling of a fellow, with a mouth from ear to ear." Macaulay preserved a dignified silence so far as any public reply was concerned, but we find him saying later to Napier, then editor of the *Edinburgh*, "I thought that a contest with your grog-drinking, cock-fighting, cudgel-playing professor of moral philosophy would be too degrading." This was some time after the attack in *Blackwood's*, and referred to a pamphlet issued by Macaulay's worst enemy, Croker, consisting largely of extracts from the abusive paragraphs of "Christopher North."

About this time occurred an incident most significant of Macaulay's character and his attitude toward great public questions. He still held his Cambridge fellow-

ship, which gave him a vote in the University senate. On learning that there was a possibility that the senate might vote to petition against the removal of the civil disabilities of the Roman Catholics, the young barrister chartered a stage-coach, recruited from the Inns of Court a group of other Cambridge fellows, sufficient to fill the coach, and drove to Cambridge, arriving just in time to defeat the petition against emancipation. And he was as tolerant toward the Jews as toward the Romanists; for his maiden speech in Parliament was in favour of removing the disabilities with which the Jews had long been oppressed. This speech, which was highly commended by Sir James Mackintosh, is such a fine illustration of Macaulay's oratorical style that a paragraph from it may be quoted here: "The power of which you deprive the Jew consists in maces and gold chains and skins of parchment with pieces of wax dangling from their edges. The power which you leave the Jew is the power of principal over clerk, of master over servant, of landlord over tenant. As things now stand, a Jew may be the richest man in England. He may possess the means of raising this party and depressing that; of making East Indian directors; of making members of Parliament. The influence of a Jew may be of the first consequence in a war which shakes Europe to the centre. His power may come into play in assisting or thwarting the greatest plans of the greatest princes; and yet, with all this confessed, acknowledged, undenied, you would have him deprived

of power! Does not wealth confer power? How are we to permit all the consequences of that wealth but one?"

In August, 1830, the overworked young Parliamentarian gave himself a holiday, and made a tour of northern France. He was received with consideration by several eminent Frenchmen, met La Fayette, and wrote to his sister most interesting accounts of his experiences, noting down "everything that he saw, heard, eat, drank, paid, and suffered."

He made but few speeches during his first parliamentary session; but when in March, 1831, the Reform Bill was introduced, he was one of the first to take the floor in its defence. And here again, as in the case of his article on Milton, he leaped at once into great fame. After he had finished, the Speaker sent for him and told him that, in all his long experience, he had never seen the House in such a state of excitement; while portions of the speech, said Sir Robert Peel, "were as beautiful as any thing I have ever heard or read." Macaulay's great success then and afterward as a parliamentary speaker was doubtless largely due to the marvelous clearness of his style. His sister, who knew his habits of mind so thoroughly, once attributed this crystalline clearness to Macaulay's habit of conversing with very young people, to whom he had a great deal to explain. From the date of his first speech on the Reform Bill he became a leader in the House of Commons. Even so conservative a critic as Jeffrey declared

of a subsequent speech on the same subject: "It puts him clearly at the head of the great speakers, if not the debaters, of the House."

But the years of literary and oratorical triumph were years of financial depression for Macaulay. By taking a bold, conscientious stand on the Bankruptcy Court Bill, he lost his commissionership, with the attendant salary of a thousand pounds, and his university fellowship ran out in 1831; so that, at the very height of his parliamentary career, he was so reduced in circumstances as to be obliged to sell the medals that he had won at Cambridge. His father's affairs went steadily from bad to worse, and for several years "every penny that Macaulay earned, beyond what the necessities of life demanded, was scrupulously devoted to paying, and at length to paying off, his father's creditors."

Soon after the final passage of the Reform Bill, in June, 1832, Macaulay was rewarded for his efficient service in behalf of that great measure by being appointed one of the commissioners of the Board of Control, which represented the crown in its relations to the East Indian directors. His duties in this office "were light or heavy, as he chose to make them." That he did not choose to make them light, appears from a letter to his sister in which he says that he stays in his office from breakfast "till near five, examining claims of money-lenders on the native sovereigns of India and reading Parliamentary papers." Meantime, in the autumn of 1832, he was elected to a seat in the new

reform Parliament as a representative of the city of Leeds, after a turbulent but not dubious contest, and at once he became the champion of the Whig party. Soon afterward, on the death of Hyde Villiers, he was made Secretary of the Board of Control, "an office that gave him weighty responsibility, defined duties, and, as it chanced, exceptional opportunities for distinction." It was in this position that he "did much to smooth the progress of those immense and salutary reforms with which the Cabinet had resolved to accompany the renewal of the India Company's charter." Meantime his articles in *The Edinburgh Review* had given to him such a standing that the editor had assured him that his contributions were the only thing that kept up the periodical at that period, and the young Parliamentarian could write to his sister: "I can not but be pleased to learn that, if I should be forced to depend on my pen for subsistence, I can command what price I choose." This was when he was about thirty-two years old.

But while he was winning great literary and political fame, his father's affairs were getting steadily worse; so that, in August, 1833, Macaulay was in a position to welcome a proposal that he should be made a member of the Supreme Council of India. Before the appointment had been made, he wrote: "The salary is ten thousand pounds a year. I am assured by persons who know Calcutta intimately, and who have themselves mixed in the highest circles and held the highest offices

at that presidency, that I may live in splendour there for five thousand a year, and may save the rest of the salary with the accruing interest. I may therefore hope to return to England at only thirty-nine, in the full vigour of life, with a fortune of thirty thousand pounds. A larger fortune I never desired."

Although he hesitated to separate himself from his family, to whom he was attached with unusual devotion, he accepted this appointment as the only way open to him for securing a competence; for, as he said: "Every day shows me more and more strongly how necessary a competence is to a man who desires to be either great or useful. . . . In order to live like a gentleman, it would be necessary for me to write, not as I have done hitherto, but regularly, and even daily. I have never made more than two hundred a year by my pen. I could not support myself in comfort on less than five hundred; and I shall in all probability have many others to support. . . . Without a competence it is not very easy for a public man to be honest; it is almost impossible for him to be thought so."

He accordingly accepted the appointment, which was made almost unanimously by the directors, after he had received warm commendation for the place even from such a vigorous political opponent as James Mill. To lessen the pains of his banishment, he induced his favourite sister to accompany him, and he made liberal provision for a splendid establishment at Calcutta, of which she was to be the social head.

In February, 1834, with his sister Hannah, Macaulay sailed for India, where he arrived early in the following June. The first six months of his new official life were spent at Ootacamund, in the Neilgherry Hills, whither his superior, Lord William Bentinck, then Governor-general of India, had withdrawn for his health, and where the new member of the Council had his first introduction to his new duties. When he had been in India only three months, he wrote to his family at home: "Money matters seem likely to go on capitally. My expenses, I find, will be smaller than I anticipated. . . . If I live, I shall get rich fast. . . . I expect to lay up, on an average, about seven thousand pounds a year while I remain in India. . . . In a few years, if I live, . . . we shall be again together in a comfortable, though a modest, home; certain of a good fire, a good joint of meat, and a good glass of wine; without owing obligations to anybody."

It must not be thought, however, that Macaulay was stingy or penurious in his eager desire to attain a degree of financial independence and to place his family beyond the danger of want. His salary was large, and his nephew assures us that he lived at Calcutta "rather more generously than the strict necessities of his position demanded. His residence, then the best in Calcutta, has long since been converted into the Bengal Club." Neither must it be supposed that he had no privations or trials in what was then regarded in England as a veritable exile. His days were often most

laborious, while his surroundings are best described in his own words: "We have our share of the miseries of life in this country. We are annually baked four months, boiled four more, and allowed the remaining four to become cool if we can. At this moment the sun is blazing like a furnace. The earth, soaked with oceans of rain, is steaming like a wet blanket. Vegetation is rotting all round us. Insects and undertakers are the only living creatures which seem to enjoy the climate."

Among the many honours that now attach to Macaulay's name, none is greater and none will perhaps be so lasting as those that grew out of his inestimable services to the great empire. If he had never written a line, and if he had been unknown as a statesman, the British empire would still owe to him an inestimable debt, because it was his wise insight and his unselfish toil that gave to India her model criminal code and her admirable educational system.

When Macaulay reached India, her educational advancement had been for some time completely checked by a deadlock in the Committee of Public Instruction, one-half of whose members were determined to encourage Oriental learning by a system of stipends paid to students of Sanscrit, Persian, and Arabic, while the other half were equally determined to teach the elements of learning in the vernacular tongues, and the higher branches in English, and were strongly averse to spending public funds for the encouragement of Oriental

scholarship. Soon after his arrival, Macaulay was made president of the committee, and in February, 1835, he defended the views of the English section of the committee in an address before the Supreme Council. His argument is one of the ablest among his many able state papers. We can quote but two sentences: "The languages of Western Europe civilized Russia. I can not doubt that they will do for the Hindoo what they have done for the Tartar." The result of this argument was a decision in favour of the English section of the committee. Two of the Orientalists resigned, several new English and native members were added, and "Macaulay entered upon the functions of president with an energy and assiduity which, in his case, were an infallible proof that his work was to his mind." In no part of his public career did he display such powers of conciliation, such tact and common sense. The result was that within thirty-five years after he began this monumental work, his biographer could truthfully say that those years had brought into existence "hundreds of thousands of natives who can appreciate European knowledge when laid before them in the English language, and can reproduce it in their own. . . . Our colleges have more than six thousand students on their books, and two hundred thousand boys are receiving a liberal education in schools of the higher order."

Macaulay's arduous labours, which made this showing possible, were voluntary and unpaid, as were

his still more arduous labours on the criminal code. Of the latter he said: "The illness of two of my colleagues threw the work almost entirely on me. . . . It has cost me very intense labour; and, whatever its faults may be, it certainly is not a slovenly performance."

In 1833, when Parliament passed the other reform measures relative to India, a commission was appointed to inquire into the jurisprudence and jurisdiction of the Eastern empire. At his own instigation, Macaulay was made president of that commission. After devoting himself to this work for a few months, he proposed to the home government that, with his two colleagues on the commission, he should be employed in framing a criminal code for the whole empire. This voluntary labour cost him nearly twelve months of assiduous toil. As with everything else he wrote, he was not satisfied until he had made the code as nearly perfect as lay in his power. He wrote in his journal of this work: "I am not ashamed to acknowledge that there are several chapters in the code on which I have been employed for months; of which I have changed the whole plan ten or twelve times; which contain not a single word as it originally stood; and with which I am still very far indeed from being satisfied." The success of the code was such that Macaulay's successor in the Council declared that it had revolutionized the state of society in a whole continent. The code was only a draft when Macaulay left India in 1838, and it was not all finally enacted into law till 1860. But it is asserted that, to-

day, the younger men in the civil service of India carry it in their saddle-bags and the older ones in their heads. One of these civil-service officers has said, "I doubt whether, even in Scotland, you would find many people who know their Bibles as Indian civilians know their codes."

Another great blessing that Macaulay conferred upon the Indian empire was to lay the foundations for what is, perhaps, the best system of civil-service examinations to be found in the world to-day. This was in 1853, fifteen years after his return to England. As a member of Parliament he was enabled, through his rare familiarity with the facts and conditions in India, to give to the movement for an "open service," with promotion by competitive examinations, such an impetus that it was only a question of time till his ideas were enacted into law, with hardly a change in their essential character. Those Americans who, to-day, are working for civil-service reform, will do well to read with great care Macaulay's remarkable argument on this subject. Bringing to the debate all his wonderful knowledge of history and his minute acquaintance with the educational development of England, he was enabled to establish beyond question his proposition that "those who attain high distinction in the world are generally men who were distinguished in their academic career," and that "men who distinguish themselves in their youth above their contemporaries almost always keep, to the end of their lives, the start which they have

gained." His biographer has justly called this speech "the most masterly vindication of the principle of appointment by competition that ever was left unanswered."

Mention should also be made of Macaulay's services in securing the abolition of the censorship of the press in India. His efforts in this direction and in reforming the civil courts of the empire brought down upon his head a series of virulent attacks from a class of civilians whose private interests were thus affected. But here, as always when a principle was at stake, it was impossible to daunt him. By nature he was intensely sympathetic, being affected to tears by any manifestation of real pathos. But those of his political or literary opponents who attempted to bully or frighten him did not know their man. He wrote and spoke most openly in stormy times, and he often handled his opponents severely. On one occasion his strictures upon the ignorance and bad taste of a writer resulted in a challenge to a duel. The challenge was borne by an Irish friend of the victim of Macaulay's pen, who, as he said, "behaved so obstinately well that there was no possibility of . . . sending for the police." Macaulay did not flinch from the meeting, but, through the offices of Lord Strafford, an amicable understanding was reached. But his bravery was moral as well as physical. In 1840, when there was imminent danger of war with France and Russia over the Eastern question, he wrote: "The treaty once made, I never would have

consented to flinch from it, whatever had been the danger . . . I would never make offensive war. . . . But I never would abstain from doing what I had a clear right to do because a neighbour chooses to threaten me with an unjust war." And three years later, when he thought that his own party leaders in Parliament had acted weakly, he wrote: "Cowardice is a mighty poor defence against malice." The same spirit inspired him in preparing his *History of England.* When he was at work upon the fifth volume, he made this note in his journal: "Read about the Darien affair. It will be impossible to tell the truth as to that matter without putting the Scotch into a rage. But the truth shall be told."

Macaulay's hopes of returning home with a moderate fortune were fulfilled. His naturally strong constitution and his clean, temperate life had enabled him to endure the depressing climate of India and yet retain surprisingly good health. On more than one occasion he was the only member of the Council not incapacitated by disease. But he was not unmindful of the risk, and we find him saying, shortly before his return to England: "It is a happy thing for us that we are not to pass another year in the reek of this deadly marsh." Early in January, 1838, he resigned his seat in the Council and his presidentships of the Law Commission and the Committee of Public Instruction, and, in company with his sister, who had meantime married Charles Edward Trevelyan, then under-secretary for foreign affairs, sailed for England.

This marriage, instead of depriving Macaulay of his sister's companionship and her services as the head of his establishment, resulted in providing him with a delightful home, both in India and during the rest of his days after his return to England. Between himself and his sister's children, one of whom was to be his biographer, there was from the first a mutual love and devotion almost as great as if he had been their father.

During his six months' voyage homeward around the Cape of Good Hope, Macaulay's father died and was buried in Westminster Abbey, in recognition of his great services to the anti-slavery cause. Not long after the return, Trevelyan was appointed assistant-secretary of the Treasury, and thus Macaulay was enabled to continue his delightful family life as a member of his sister's household. "He took a house in Great George Street," writes the sister, "and insisted on our all living together; and a most happy year 1840 was." Although Macaulay subsequently occupied independent rooms and a house of his own, he continued to be, in a very real sense, a member of his sister's family up to the day of his death.

His attitude toward life after his return is seen in an extract from his journal, made in the summer of 1838: "I have returned with a small independence, but still an independence. All my tastes and wishes lead me to prefer literature to politics." But his countrymen were to call for his services as a statesman many times. Before he had been three months in England he was offered by

Lord Melbourne the office of Judge-advocate. "They press me . . . and assure me that a seat in Parliament may be procured for me. . . . The salary is £2500 a year. . . . But I went to India to get independence, and I have got it, and I will keep it. . . . I admitted it [the salary] to be above the market-price of my services; but it was below the fancy price which a peculiar turn of mind led me to put on my liberty and my studies." But he was still vitally interested in the fortunes of his party and his country; and when, in the early summer of 1839, the Whigs found themselves in sore need of his talents to aid them in recovering their lost prestige, he readily accepted a seat in Parliament as the representative of the city of Edinburgh. In the following September he accepted the Secretaryship at War and became a member of the Cabinet. In March, 1840, he writes: "I have got through my estimates with flying colours; made a long speech full of figures and details without hesitation or mistake of any sort; stood catechising on all sorts of questions; and got six millions of public money in the course of an hour or two. I rather like the sort of work, and I have some aptitude for it. I find business pretty nearly enough to occupy all my time; and if I have a few minutes to myself, I spend them with my sister and niece; so that, except while I am dressing and undressing, I get no reading at all. I do not know but that it is as well for me to live thus for a time. I became too mere a bookworm in India, and on my voyage home."

But such a life could not continue long for a man so devoted to his books as was Macaulay. He was returned to Parliament from Edinburgh in the spring of 1841, without opposition, and in the following July he took a suite of chambers in the Albany, "that luxurious cloister, whose inviolable tranquillity affords so agreeable a relief from the roar and flood of the Piccadilly traffic." Macaulay thus describes his chambers, "every corner of which," his nephew says "was library": "I hope to lead during some years a sort of life peculiarly suited to my taste — college life at the West End of London. I have an entrance-hall, two sitting-rooms, a bed-room, a kitchen, cellars, and two rooms for servants . . . and this in a situation which no younger son of a duke need be ashamed to put on his card." In speaking of his circumstances at this time, he says: "Now I am free. I am independent. I am in Parliament, as honourably seated as a man can be. My family is comfortably off. I have leisure for literature, yet I am not reduced to the necessity of writing for money. If I had to choose a lot from all that there are in human life, I am not sure that I should prefer any to that which has fallen me. I am sincerely and thoroughly contented."

For fifteen years he resided in his "luxurious cloister," and here he performed the larger part of those prodigious literary labours that resulted in giving to the world his historical masterpiece. It was said of him at this period that "no member ever produced so much effect upon the proceedings of Parliament who spent

so many hours in the Library and so few in the House."

But Macaulay's labours were not confined to his History and his duties as a statesman. As early as 1833, during his first term in Parliament, he had manifested his poetical powers in *The Armada*, and his friends were from time to time made aware that he was revolving in his mind other possible poems in his moments of leisure. In 1838, during a visit to Italy, which he made soon after returning from India, he made this entry in his journal: "I meditated some verses for my ballad of *Romulus*, but made only one stanza to my satisfaction." This is the poem afterward published under the title of *The Prophecy of Capys*. On reaching Rome he records: "I then went toward the river, to the spot where the old Pons Sublicius stood, and looked about to see how my Horatius agreed with the topography. Pretty well: but his house must be on Mount Palatine; for he would never see Mount Cœlius from the spot where he fought." And a few days later, "I have altered some parts of *Horatius* to my mind." From boyhood he had talked of "restoring to poetry the legends of which poetry had been robbed by history," and in 1841 he wrote to his most intimate friend, Ellis: "I can not send you *Virginius*, for I have not a copy by me at present, and have not time to make one. When you return, I hope to have finished another ballad, on the Lake Regillus. . . . I may perhaps publish a small volume next spring. I am encouraged by the approba-

tion of all who have seen the little pieces. I find the unlearned quite as well satisfied as the learned." In 1842 he writes to Napier about the theory concerning early Roman history which Niebuhr and Arnold had adopted: "I have myself not the smallest doubt of its truth. It is, that the stories of the birth of Romulus and Remus, the fight of the Horatii and Curatii, and all the other romantic tales which fill the first three or four books of Livy, came from the lost ballads of the early Romans. I amused myself in India with trying to restore some of these long-perished poems. Arnold saw two of them, and wrote me in such terms of eulogy that I have been induced to correct and complete them. . . . I think of publishing them next November in a small volume."

The volume appeared at the date assigned, and won instant praise from all sides. Even Professor Wilson, Macaulay's most vituperative enemy in his early days, commended the poems in "a pæan of hearty, unqualified panegyric." The sales of the volume indicate its success. Eighteen thousand copies were sold in Great Britain in ten years, forty thousand in twenty years, and nearly one hundred thousand in thirty-five years. It is an interesting fact that, in the only pathetic poem in the volume, the character of Virginia was intended to embody Macaulay's feelings toward his little niece, Margaret Trevelyan, afterward Lady Holland, to whom he was devotedly attached.

In December, 1845, Macaulay was made paymaster-

general in the new Cabinet, then formed by Lord John Russell. In commenting on this new turn in his affairs, he says: "Lord John told me that he found that I wanted leisure and quiet more than salary and business. . . . He therefore offered me the Pay Office. . . . I at once accepted it. . . . I shall have two thousand a year for the trouble of signing my name. I must indeed attend Parliament more closely than I have of late done; but my mornings will be as much my own as if I were out of office."

In the summer of 1847 Macaulay received the only severe political defeat in his remarkable career. The passions of contending religious factions were raging in Edinburgh, and he refused, with cold dignity, to become sponsor for either branch of the extremists, who maintained that "Christian men ought to send Christian men to represent them." Moreover, he had already offended many of his narrower constituents by his bold stand in favour of endowing a Roman Catholic college. The consequence was that he was not only defeated at the poll, but was "treated with a brutality the details of which are painful to read, and would be worse than useless to record." Macaulay accepted the situation most philosophically, writing to an old friend: "I think that, having once been manumitted, after the old fashion, by a slap in the face, I shall not take to bondage again." On the evening after his defeat was announced, he retired to his room and wrote for his own consolation his noble poetic apostrophe to "the

world of thought," of which the following is a significant stanza:

> "Without one envious sigh, one anxious scheme,
> The nether sphere, the fleeting hour resign,
> Mine is the world of thought, the world of dream,
> Mine all the past, and all the future mine."

A few days later he wrote to his sister: "My table is covered with letters of condolence and with invitations from half the places which have not yet chosen members. . . . I did not know how great a politician I was till my Edinburgh friends chose to dismiss me from politics. I never can leave public life with more dignity and grace than at present." He persisted in his refusal to re-enter public life for many years. Five years after the Edinburgh defeat he writes: "I have escaped from Parliament, and am living in the way best suited to my temperament. I lead a college life in London, with the comforts of domestic life near me; for Hannah and her children are very dear to me."

Macaulay's correspondence in the summer and autumn of 1848 is full of allusions to his great historical work, the first volumes of which were then in the hands of the publisher. He writes in a letter to his mother: "The state of my mind is this: when I compare my book with what I imagine history ought to be, I feel dejected and ashamed; but when I compare it with some histories which have a high repute, I feel reassured."

In the words of Trevelyan, "he might have spared

his fears. Within three days after its first appearance the fortune of the book was already secure." It sold at the rate of twenty-two thousand copies — six editions — in about four months.

In November, 1848, he was elected Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow, and was received with almost royal honours by the Scotch city when he went up to deliver his installation address in the following March, although he looked forward to the public demonstrations with some misgivings, saying: "I felt like a man going to be hanged."

In July, 1849, he was summoned to Buckingham Palace by Prince Albert, who offered him the professorship of Modern History at Cambridge, and strongly urged him to accept, but Macaulay resolutely refused the new honour, writing in his journal: "In truth my temper is that of the wolf in the fable. I can not bear the collar, and I have got rid of much finer and richer collars than this. It would be strange if, having sacrificed for liberty a seat in the Cabinet and twenty-five hundred pounds a year, I should now sacrifice liberty for a chair at Cambridge and four hundred pounds a year."

By October, 1850, the remarkable sales of his History had so added to his fortune that he "walked to Westbourne Terrace and talked with Hannah about setting up a brougham. I really shall do it. The cost will be small and the comfort great. It is but fair, too, that I should have some of the advantage of my own labour.' So the carriage was secured, and, with his cus-

tomary boyish ingenuousness, the famous historian exults in "the first time I ever had a carriage of my own, except when in office."

In January, 1852, Macaulay was again urged by Lord John Russell to become a member of the Cabinet then forming, but he refused, giving "about a quarter of my reasons, though half a quarter would have been sufficient." The principal reason was that Macaulay had now become intensely absorbed in completing his History, which he justly regarded as his great life-work. There was only one consideration that could induce him to take for political service any time from that which, as his biographer says, "had grown dearer to him than life itself." This consideration was a natural desire to demonstrate to his former constituents at Edinburgh that they had been wrong in defeating and humiliating him five years before. By the summer of 1852 the time was ripe for such a demonstration. The more reasonable of the Edinburgh electors had not been wanting in frequent expressions of regret and chagrin over the treatment that Macaulay had received at the hands of their neighbours. So it was not surprising that, in July of that year, he was re-elected to Parliament by a large majority in Edinburgh, although he had manifested, during the Parliamentary campaign, the most rigid and almost disdainful independence. He refused even to visit the Scotch city or to give any pledges whatsoever, believing it "to be of the highest importance that great constituent bodies should learn

to respect the conscience and the honour of their representatives." To the Secretary of the Scottish Reformation Society he wrote as follows: "If, indeed, the electors of such a city as Edinburgh should, without requiring from me any explanation or any guarantee, think fit to confide their interests to my care, I should not feel myself justified in refusing to accept a public trust offered me in a manner so honourable and peculiar. . . . On no other terms can I be induced to leave that quiet and happy retirement in which I have passed the last four years."

His attendance on the sessions of Parliament during his last term was infrequent, but honours continued to be poured upon him. In June, 1854, he received the degree of Doctor of Civil Law from Oxford, where, though a Whig, he was received with great enthusiasm. In the same year he was chosen president of the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh. In 1856 he formally retired from Parliament, and bought the lease of "a very agreeable house and garden at Kensington," then called Holly Lodge, but since called Airlie Lodge. Although he expressed regret at leaving the chambers in the Albany, he became greatly attached to his Kensington home, which he called "my little paradise of shrubs and turf."

In August, 1857, he was offered a peerage at the suggestion of Lord Palmerston. He says: "A great day in my life. . . . I was very much surprised. Perhaps no such offer was ever made without the slightest solici-

tation, direct or indirect, to a man of humble origin and moderate fortune, who had long quitted public life. I had no hesitation about accepting, with many respectful and grateful expressions." In November, 1857, he was unanimously elected High Steward of the Borough of Cambridge, and this was the last of his public offices. The absorbing demands of his literary work and the decline of his health had long since made him almost indifferent to the excitements of contemporary party conflicts.

When Thackeray declared that Macaulay "reads twenty books to write a sentence," he barely overstated the case. But such an absorption in severe mental labour, unaccompanied, as it was, with systematic and vigorous physical exercise, could have but one result. Very soon after Macaulay's remarkable justification by his repentant Edinburgh constituents, he began to complain of feeling poorly and incapable of vigorous exertion. He said: "I seem under a spell of laziness. Then I warm, and can go on working twelve hours at a stretch. How I worked a year ago! And why can not I work so now?" Soon afterward he complained of feeling languid and oppressed, hardly able to walk or breathe. An examination by an eminent surgeon revealed a serious derangement of the heart, and Macaulay was ordered to drop all work and to resort to Clifton to recuperate. This was in 1852. He perfectly understood the seriousness of his case, and from this time forward his letters contain frequent premonitions

of his early death. He had but one regret, — the thought that he must leave uncompleted his great historical work. He was never well again, though, by great care, he was still able to accomplish much. He says: "I became twenty years older in a week. A mile is more to me now than ten miles a year ago. . . . My life will not, I think, be long. But I have clear faculties, warm affections, abundant sources of pleasure." His vigour was not entirely sapped, however; for, in October, 1852, he went down to Edinburgh and delivered before his constituents there "forty minutes of as rattling a party speech as was ever delivered from the Westminster hustings." His last speech in the House of Commons was in favour of a more tolerant treatment of the Catholics. During the last four years of his life he was much confined to his house in bad weather, but he was still "absorbed in his History," and was not unhappy. His biographer tells us that "the prayer that most often came to his lips was that he might not survive those whom he loved." Yet it is pathetic to read in his journal how, repeatedly after his first warning in 1852, he used to apply severe tests to his memory, in order to determine whether this, his most remarkable faculty, had in any way begun to fail.

Another labour that added to the strain upon the historian was the publication of his speeches. It had not been his intention to give to the public these specimens of his more or less extempore composition; but he was compelled to publish them by the action of a certain

bookseller, who had the impudence to advertise the publication of Macaulay's speeches "by special licence." During the year 1853, therefore, Macaulay devoted himself assiduously to preparing for the press a selection of his best speeches. He tells us that he was obliged to rewrite many of them from memory and from the hints given by the reports. To these speeches he added two of his great state papers, prepared while he was a member of the Supreme Council in India. He also contributed, gratis, to the Encyclopædia Britannica, then in process of publication by his friend Adam Black, several of the best literary productions of his life. It was such labours as these, added to his tremendous exertions on his masterpiece, that hastened the end. His death was possibly hastened also by a depression of spirits caused by a painful turn in his family relations. His intense devotion to his sister and her family has been noticed. Early in the year 1859, his brother-in-law, Trevelyan, was appointed governor of Madras, and soon afterward sailed for India, expecting his family to follow him soon. Macaulay never recovered from the consequent depression of his spirits. He seemed not to wish to prolong his life in the absence of his loved ones. With infinite pathos, he writes in his journal for December 19, 1859, "A month more of such days as I have been passing of late would make me impatient to get to my little narrow crib, like a weary factory child." But his prayer that he might not be left alone was answered.

On the 28th of December, 1859, he passed painlessly away while sitting in his library chair with an open book before him.

Of Macaulay's character — of his boyish frankness and rugged sincerity; his sturdy independence, where a moral principle was at stake; his complacency, often verging on self-conceit, yet balanced repeatedly by a very modest estimate of his work in comparing it with the great masters of antiquity; of his prodigious industry; his wonderful memory; the marvelous extent of his reading, familiar as he was with all the treasures of ancient and modern literature, reading the classical masterpieces over and over; of his methods of work; of the gradual development of his history and the surprising care he exercised to make it "something which shall for a few days supersede the last fashionable novel"; of his patriotism; his sturdy conservatism; his literary preferences; his attitude toward science, toward religion, and toward contemporary men; of his habitual generosity and his liberality to all deserving causes and persons; of his tenderness, such that he wept over the pathos of the Odyssey; of his standing and his influence upon the men and measures of his day — of all this we have not space here to speak. For a delightful exposition of these and many other points of interest in Macaulay's career, the reader must turn to the two entertaining volumes of his life and letters, edited by his nephew, George Otto Trevelyan. It may be said that one never really knows a great

author until one has read his letters. The reader is urged not to deny himself the delight and the profit that is sure to be obtained from a perusal of Trevelyan's admirable volumes.

The circumstances attending the composition of Macaulay's Essay on Johnson are best described in the words of his biographer: "During the later years of his life, Macaulay sent an occasional article to *The Encyclopædia Britannica*. 'He had ceased,' says Mr. Adam Black, 'to write for the reviews or other periodicals, though often earnestly solicited to do so. It is entirely to his friendly feeling that I am indebted for those literary gems, which could not have been purchased with money; and it is but justice to his memory that I should record, as one of the many instances of the kindness and generosity of his heart, that he made it a stipulation of his contributing to the Encyclopædia that remuneration should not be so much as mentioned.' The articles in question are those on Atterbury, Bunyan, Goldsmith, Doctor Johnson, and William Pitt. . . . The conscientious and unsparing industry of his former days now brought Macaulay a reward of a value quite inestimable in the eyes of every true author. The habit of always working up to the highest standard within his reach was so ingrained in his nature that, however sure and rapid might be the decline of his physical strength, the quality of his productions remained the same as ever. Instead of writing worse, he only wrote less. Compact

in form, crisp and nervous in style, these five little essays are every thing which an article in an encyclopædia should be. The reader, as he travels softly and swiftly along, congratulates himself on having lighted upon what he regards as a most fascinating literary or political memoir; but the student, on a closer examination, discovers that every fact and date and circumstance is distinctly and faithfully recorded in its due chronological sequence. Macaulay's belief about himself as a writer was that he improved to the last; and the question of the superiority of his later over his earlier manner may securely be staked upon a comparison between the article on Johnson in *The Edinburgh Review* and the article on Johnson in *The Encyclopædia Britannica*. The latter of the two is, indeed, a model of that which its eminent subject pronounced to be the essential qualification of a biographer, — the art of writing trifles with dignity."

LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

SAMUEL JOHNSON, one of the most eminent English writers of the eighteenth century, was the son of Michael Johnson, who was, at the beginning of that century, a magistrate[1] of Lichfield, and a bookseller of great note in the midland counties. Michael's abilities and attainments seem to have been considerable. He was so well acquainted with the contents of the volumes which he exposed to sale, that the country rectors of Staffordshire and Worcestershire thought him an oracle on points of learning. Between him and the clergy, indeed, there was a strong religious and political sympathy. He was a zealous churchman, and, though he had qualified himself for municipal office by taking the oaths to the sovereigns in possession, was to the last a Jacobite[2] in heart. At his house, a house which is still pointed out to every traveller who visits Lichfield, Samuel was born on the 18th of September, 1709. In the child, the physical, intellectual, and moral peculiarities which afterwards distinguished the man were plainly discernible; great muscular strength, accompanied by much awkwardness

[1] The English term for a justice of the peace. He has, however, many functions not performed by an American justice.

[2] An adherent of James (Jacobus) II, or his direct descendants.

and many infirmities; great quickness of parts, with a morbid propensity to sloth and procrastination; a kind and generous heart, with a gloomy and irritable temper. He had inherited from his ancestors a scrofulous taint, which it was beyond the power of medicine to remove. His parents were weak enough to believe that the royal touch was a specific for this malady. In his third year he was taken up to London, inspected by the court surgeon, prayed over by the court chaplains, and stroked and presented with a piece of gold by Queen Anne. One of his earliest recollections was that of a stately lady in a diamond stomacher[1] and a long black hood. Her hand was applied in vain. The boy's features, which were originally noble and not irregular, were distorted by his malady. His cheeks were deeply scarred. He lost for a time the sight of one eye; and he saw but very imperfectly with the other. But the force of his mind overcame every impediment. Indolent as he was, he acquired knowledge with such ease and rapidity that at every school to which he was sent he was soon the best scholar. From sixteen to eighteen he resided at home, and was left to his own devices. He learned much at this time, though his studies were without guidance and without plan. He ransacked his father's shelves, dipped into a multitude of books, read what was interesting, and passed over what was dull. An ordinary lad would have acquired little or no useful

[1] An ornamental covering for the breast. Those worn by women were often richly decorated.

knowledge in such a way: but much that was dull to ordinary lads was interesting to Samuel. He read little Greek; for his proficiency in that language was not such that he could take much pleasure in the masters of Attic poetry and eloquence. But he had left school a good Latinist; and he soon acquired, in the large and miscellaneous library of which he now had the command, an extensive knowledge of Latin literature. That Augustan delicacy of taste, which is the boast of the great public schools of England, he never possessed. But he was early familiar with some classical writers who were quite unknown to the best scholars in the sixth form at Eton. He was peculiarly attracted by the works of the great restorers of learning.[1] Once, while searching for some apples, he found a huge folio volume of Petrarch's works. The name excited his curiosity; and he eagerly devoured hundreds of pages. Indeed, the diction and versification of his own Latin compositions show that he had paid at least as much attention to modern copies from the antique as to the original models.

While he was thus irregularly educating himself, his family was sinking into hopeless poverty. Old Michael Johnson was much better qualified to pore upon books, and to talk about them, than to trade in them. His business declined; his debts increased; it was with difficulty that the daily expenses of his household were

[1] The precursors of the Reformation; such as Petrarch, Politian, Erasmus, and Sir Thomas More.

defrayed. It was out of his power to support his son at either university: but a wealthy neighbour offered assistance; and, in reliance on promises which proved to be of very little value, Samuel was entered at Pembroke College, Oxford. When the young scholar presented himself to the rulers of that society, they were amazed not more by his ungainly figure and eccentric manners than by the quantity of extensive and curious information which he had picked up during many months of desultory but not unprofitable study. On the first day of his residence he surprised his teachers by quoting Macrobius; and one of the most learned among them declared that he had never known a freshman of equal attainments.

At Oxford, Johnson resided during about three years. He was poor, even to raggedness; and his appearance excited a mirth and a pity which were equally intolerable to his haughty spirit. He was driven from the quadrangle of Christ Church by the sneering looks which the members of that aristocratical society cast at the holes in his shoes. Some charitable person placed a new pair at his door; but he spurned them away in a fury. Distress made him, not servile, but reckless and ungovernable. No opulent gentleman commoner, panting for one-and-twenty, could have treated the academical authorities with more gross disrespect. The needy scholar was generally to be seen under the gate of Pembroke, a gate now adorned with his effigy, haranguing a circle of lads, over whom, in spite of his

tattered gown and dirty linen, his wit and audacity gave him an undisputed ascendency. In every mutiny against the discipline of the college he was the ringleader. Much was pardoned, however, to a youth so highly distinguished by abilities and acquirements. He had early made himself known by turning Pope's *Messiah* into Latin verse. The style and rhythm, indeed, were not exactly Virgilian; but the translation found many admirers, and was read with pleasure by Pope himself.

The time drew near at which Johnson would, in the ordinary course of things, have become a Bachelor of Arts: but he was at the end of his resources. Those promises of support on which he had relied had not been kept. His family could do nothing for him. His debts to Oxford tradesmen were small indeed, yet larger than he could pay. In the autumn of 1731 he was under the necessity of quitting the university without a degree. In the following winter his father died. The old man left but a pittance; and of that pittance almost the whole was appropriated to the support of his widow. The property to which Samuel succeeded amounted to no more than twenty pounds.

His life, during the thirty years which followed, was one hard struggle with poverty. The misery of that struggle needed no aggravation, but was aggravated by the sufferings of an unsound body and an unsound mind. Before the young man left the university, his hereditary malady had broken forth in a singularly cruel form. He

had become an incurable hypochondriac.[1] He said long after that he had been mad all his life, or at least not perfectly sane; and, in truth, eccentricities less strange than his have often been thought grounds sufficient for absolving felons, and for setting aside wills. His grimaces, his gestures, his mutterings, sometimes diverted and sometimes terrified people who did not know him. At a dinner-table he would, in a fit of absence, stoop down and twitch off a lady's shoe. He would amaze a drawing-room by suddenly ejaculating a clause of the Lord's Prayer. He would conceive an unintelligible aversion to a particular alley, and perform a great circuit rather than see the hateful place. He would set his heart on touching every post in the streets through which he walked. If by any chance he missed a post, he would go back a hundred yards and repair the omission. Under the influence of his disease his senses became morbidly torpid, and his imagination morbidly active. At one time he would stand poring on the town clock without being able to tell the hour. At another, he would distinctly hear his mother, who was many miles off, calling him by his name. But this was not the worst. A deep melancholy took possession of him, and gave a dark tinge to all his views of human nature and of human destiny. Such wretchedness as he endured has driven many men to shoot themselves or drown themselves. But he was under no temptation to commit

[1] A person afflicted with a mental malady that causes him to take a gloomy view of everything.

suicide. He was sick of life; but he was afraid of death; and he shuddered at every sight or sound which reminded him of the inevitable hour. In religion he found but little comfort during his long and frequent fits of dejection; for his religion partook of his own character. The light from heaven shone on him indeed, but not in a direct line, or with its own pure splendour. The rays had to struggle through a disturbing medium; they reached him refracted, dulled, and discoloured by the thick gloom which had settled on his soul; and, though they might be sufficiently clear to guide him, were too dim to cheer him.

With such infirmities of body and of mind, this celebrated man was left, at two-and-twenty, to fight his way through the world. He remained during about five years in the midland counties. At Lichfield, his birthplace and his early home, he had inherited some friends and acquired others. He was kindly noticed by Henry Hervey, a gay officer of noble family, who happened to be quartered there. Gilbert Walmesley, registrar of the ecclesiastical court of the diocese, a man of distinguished parts, learning, and knowledge of the world, did himself honour by patronizing the young adventurer, whose repulsive person, unpolished manners, and squalid garb, moved many of the petty aristocracy of the neighbourhood to laughter or to disgust. At Lichfield, however, Johnson could find no way of earning a livelihood. He became usher of a grammar school in Leicestershire; he resided as a humble companion

in the house of a country gentleman; but a life of dependence was insupportable to his haughty spirit. He repaired to Birmingham, and there earned a few guineas by literary drudgery. In that town he printed a translation, little noticed at the time, and long forgotten, of a Latin book about Abyssinia. He then put forth proposals for publishing by subscription the poems of Politian, with notes containing a history of modern Latin verse: but subscriptions did not come in; and the volume never appeared.

While leading this vagrant and miserable life, Johnson fell in love. The object of his passion was Mrs. Elizabeth Porter, a widow who had children as old as himself. To ordinary spectators, the lady appeared to be a short, fat, coarse woman, painted half an inch thick, dressed in gaudy colours, and fond of exhibiting provincial airs and graces which were not exactly those of the Queensberrys and Lepels. To Johnson, however, whose passions were strong, whose eyesight was too weak to distinguish ceruse[1] from natural bloom, and who had seldom or never been in the same room with a woman of real fashion, his Titty, as he called her, was the most beautiful, graceful, and accomplished of her sex. That his admiration was unfeigned cannot be doubted; for she was as poor as himself. She accepted, with a readiness which did her little honour, the addresses of a suitor who might have been her son. The marriage, however, in spite of occasional wranglings,

[1] A cosmetic prepared from white lead.

proved happier than might have been expected. The lover continued to be under the illusions of the wedding-day till the lady died in her sixty-fourth year. On her monument he placed an inscription extolling the charms of her person and of her manners; and when, long after her decease, he had occasion to mention her, he exclaimed, with a tenderness half ludicrous, half pathetic, "Pretty creature!"

His marriage made it necessary for him to exert himself more strenuously than he had hitherto done. He took a house in the neighbourhood of his native town, and advertised for pupils. But eighteen months passed away; and only three pupils came to his academy. Indeed, his appearance was so strange, and his temper so violent, that his schoolroom must have resembled an ogre's den. Nor was the tawdry, painted grandmother whom he called his Titty, well qualified to make provision for the comfort of young gentlemen. David Garrick, who was one of the pupils, used many years later to throw the best company of London into convulsions of laughter by mimicking the endearments of this extraordinary pair.

At length Johnson, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, determined to seek his fortune in the capital as a literary adventurer. He set out with a few guineas, three acts of the tragedy of *Irene* in manuscript, and two or three letters of introduction from his friend Walmesley.

Never, since literature became a calling in England,

had it been a less gainful calling than at the time when Johnson took up his residence in London. In the preceding generation a writer of eminent merit was sure to be munificently rewarded by the government. The least that he could expect was a pension or a sinecure place; and, if he showed any aptitude for politics, he might hope to be a member of parliament, a lord of the treasury, an ambassador, a secretary of state. It would be easy, on the other hand, to name several writers of the nineteenth century of whom the least successful has received forty thousand pounds from the booksellers. But Johnson entered on his vocation in the most dreary part of the dreary interval which separated two ages of prosperity. Literature had ceased to flourish under the patronage of the great, and had not begun to flourish under the patronage of the public. One man of letters, indeed, Pope, had acquired by his pen what was then considered as a handsome fortune, and lived on a footing of equality with nobles and ministers of state. But this was a solitary exception. Even an author whose reputation was established, and whose works were popular, such an author as Thomson, whose *Seasons* were in every library; such an author as Fielding, whose *Pasquin* had had a greater run than any drama since *The Beggar's Opera*, was sometimes glad to obtain, by pawning his best coat, the means of dining on tripe at a cookshop underground, where he could wipe his hands, after his greasy meal, on the back of a Newfoundland dog. It is easy, therefore, to imagine what

humiliations and privations must have awaited the novice who had still to earn a name. One of the publishers to whom Johnson applied for employment measured with a scornful eye that athletic though uncouth frame, and exclaimed, "You had better get a porter's knot,[1] and carry trunks." Nor was the advice bad; for a porter was likely to be as plentifully fed, and as comfortably lodged, as a poet.

Some time appears to have elapsed before Johnson was able to form any literary connexion from which he could expect more than bread for the day which was passing over him. He never forgot the generosity with which Hervey, who was now residing in London, relieved his wants during this time of trial. "Harry Hervey," said the old philosopher many years later, "was a vicious man; but he was very kind to me. If you call a dog Hervey, I shall love him." At Hervey's table Johnson sometimes enjoyed feasts which were made more agreeable by contrast. But in general he dined, and thought he dined well, on sixpennyworth of meat and a pennyworth of bread at an alehouse near Drury Lane.

The effect of the privations and sufferings which he endured at this time was discernible to the last in his temper and his deportment. His manners had never been courtly. They now became almost savage. Being frequently under the necessity of wearing shabby coats and dirty shirts, he became a confirmed sloven. Being often very hungry when he sat down to his meals, he

[1] A pad for supporting burdens on the head and shoulders.

contracted a habit of eating with ravenous greediness. Even to the end of his life, and even at the tables of the great, the sight of food affected him as it affects wild beasts and birds of prey. His taste in cookery, formed in subterranean ordinaries[1] and alamode beef-shops, was far from delicate. Whenever he was so fortunate as to have near him a hare that had been kept too long, or a meat-pie made with rancid butter, he gorged himself with such violence that his veins swelled, and the moisture broke out on his forehead. The affronts which his poverty emboldened stupid and low-minded men to offer to him, would have broken a mean spirit into sycophancy, but made him rude even to ferocity. Unhappily the insolence which, while it was defensive, was pardonable, and in some sense respectable, accompanied him into societies where he was treated with courtesy and kindness. He was repeatedly provoked into striking those who had taken liberties with him. All the sufferers, however, were wise enough to abstain from talking about their beatings, except Osborne, the most rapacious and brutal of booksellers, who proclaimed everywhere that he had been knocked down by the huge fellow whom he had hired to puff the Harleian Library.

About a year after Johnson had begun to reside in London, he was fortunate enough to obtain regular employment from Cave, an enterprising and intelligent bookseller, who was proprietor and editor of *The Gentle-*

[1] What would now be called in America cheap restaurants.

man's Magazine. That journal, just entering on the ninth year of its long existence, was the only periodical work in the kingdom which then had what would now be called a large circulation. It was, indeed, the chief source of parliamentary intelligence. It was not then safe, even during a recess, to publish an account of the proceedings of either House without some disguise. Cave, however, ventured to entertain his readers with what he called *Reports of the Debates of the Senate of Lilliput*. France was Blefuscu: London was Mildendo: pounds were sprugs: the Duke of Newcastle was the Nardac Secretary of State: Lord Hardwicke was the Hurgo Hickrad; and William Pulteney was Wingul Pulnub. To write the speeches was, during several years, the business of Johnson. He was generally furnished with notes, meagre indeed, and inaccurate, of what had been said; but sometimes he had to find arguments and eloquence both for the ministry and for the opposition. He was himself a Tory, not from rational conviction — for his serious opinion was that one form of government was just as good or as bad as another — but from mere passion, such as inflamed the Capulets against the Montagues, or the Blues[1] of the Roman circus against the Greens.[1] In his infancy he had heard so much talk about the villanies of the Whigs, and the dangers of the Church, that he had become a furious partisan when he could scarcely speak. Before

[1] In the Roman circus the charioteers were distinguished by the colours of their liveries.

he was three he had insisted on being taken to hear Sacheverell preach at Lichfield Cathedral, and had listened to the sermon with as much respect, and probably with as much intelligence, as any Staffordshire squire in the congregation. The work which had been begun in the nursery had been completed by the university. Oxford, when Johnson resided there, was the most Jacobitical[1] place in England; and Pembroke was one of the most Jacobitical colleges in Oxford. The prejudices which he brought up to London were scarcely less absurd than those of his own *Tom Tempest*. Charles II and James II were two of the best kings that ever reigned. Laud, a poor creature who never did, said, or wrote anything indicating more than the ordinary capacity of an old woman, was a prodigy of parts and learning over whose tomb Art and Genius still continued to weep. Hampden deserved no more honourable name than that of "the zealot of rebellion." Even the ship-money, condemned not less decidedly by Falkland and Clarendon than by the bitterest Roundheads, Johnson would not pronounce to have been an unconstitutional impost. Under a government the mildest that had ever been known in the world — under a government which allowed to the people an unprecedented liberty of speech and action — he fancied that he was a slave; he assailed the ministry with obloquy which refuted itself, and regretted the lost freedom and happiness of those golden days in which a writer who

[1] A synonym for narrow conservatism. See footnote, p. 55.

had taken but one-tenth part of the licence allowed to him, would have been pilloried, mangled with the shears, whipped at the cart's tail, and flung into a noisome dungeon to die. He hated dissenters and stock-jobbers,[1] the excise and the army, septennial parliaments, and continental connexions. He long had an aversion to the Scotch, an aversion of which he could not remember the commencement, but which, he owned, had probably originated in his abhorrence of the conduct of the nation during the Great Rebellion. It is easy to guess in what manner debates on great party questions were likely to be reported by a man whose judgement was so much disordered by party spirit. A show of fairness was indeed necessary to the prosperity of the magazine. But Johnson long afterwards owned that, though he had saved appearances, he had taken care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it; and, in fact, every passage which has lived, every passage which bears the marks of his higher faculties, is put into the mouth of some member of the opposition.

A few weeks after Johnson had entered on these obscure labours, he published a work which at once placed him high among the writers of his age. It is probable that what he had suffered during his first year in London had often reminded him of some parts of that noble poem in which Juvenal has described the misery and degradation of a needy man of letters, lodged among the pigeons' nests in the tottering gar-

[1] Speculators in general.

rets which overhung the streets of Rome. Pope's admirable imitations of Horace's *Satires* and *Epistles* had recently appeared, were in every hand, and were by many readers thought superior to the originals. What Pope had done for Horace, Johnson aspired to do for Juvenal. The enterprise was bold, and yet judicious. For between Johnson and Juvenal there was much in common, much more certainly than between Pope and Horace.

Johnson's *London* appeared without his name in May, 1738. He received only ten guineas for this stately and vigorous poem: but the sale was rapid, and the success complete. A second edition was required within a week. Those small critics who are always desirous to lower established reputations ran about proclaiming that the anonymous satirist was superior to Pope in Pope's own peculiar department of literature. It ought to be remembered, to the honour of Pope, that he joined heartily in the applause with which the appearance of a rival genius was welcomed. He made inquiries about the author of *London*. Such a man, he said, could not long be concealed. The name was soon discovered; and Pope, with great kindness, exerted himself to obtain an academical degree and the mastership of a grammar school for the poor young poet. The attempt failed; and Johnson remained a bookseller's hack.

It does not appear that these two men, the most eminent writer of the generation which was going out,

and the most eminent writer of the generation which was coming in, ever saw each other. They lived in very different circles; one surrounded by dukes and earls, the other by starving pamphleteers and index-makers. Among Johnson's associates at this time may be mentioned Boyse, who, when his shirts were pledged, scrawled Latin verses sitting up in bed with his arms through two holes in his blanket; who composed very respectable sacred poetry when he was sober, and who was at last run over by a hackney coach when he was drunk; Hoole, surnamed the metaphysical tailor, who, instead of attending to his measures, used to trace geometrical diagrams on the board where he sate cross-legged; and the penitent impostor, George Psalmanazar, who, after poring all day, in a humble lodging, on the folios of Jewish rabbis and Christian fathers, indulged himself at night with literary and theological conversation at an ale-house in the city. But the most remarkable of the persons with whom at this time Johnson consorted, was Richard Savage, an earl's son, a shoemaker's apprentice, who had seen life in all its forms, who had feasted among blue ribbands[1] in St. James's Square, and had lain with fifty pounds weight of irons on his legs in the condemned ward of Newgate. This man had, after many vicissitudes of fortune, sunk at last into abject and hopeless poverty. His pen had

[1] Knights of the Order of the Garter, who are still distinguished by a blue ribbon worn across the breast on state occasions. The order was founded by Edward III in 1347.

failed him. His patrons had been taken away by death, or estranged by the riotous profusion with which he squandered their bounty, and the ungrateful insolence with which he rejected their advice. He now lived by begging. He dined on venison and champagne whenever he had been so fortunate as to borrow a guinea. If his questing had been unsuccessful, he appeased the rage of hunger with some scraps of broken meat, and lay down to rest under the Piazza of Covent Garden in warm weather, and in cold weather as near as he could get to the furnace of a glass-house. Yet, in his misery, he was still an agreeable companion. He had an inexhaustible store of anecdotes about that gay and brilliant world from which he was now an outcast. He had observed the great men of both parties in hours of careless relaxation, had seen the leaders of opposition without the mask of patriotism, and had heard the prime minister roar with laughter and tell stories not over decent. During some months Savage lived in the closest familiarity with Johnson; and then the friends parted, not without tears. Johnson remained in London to drudge for Cave. Savage went to the west of England, lived there as he had lived everywhere, and, in 1743, died, penniless and heart-broken, in Bristol gaol.

Soon after his death, while the public curiosity was strongly excited about his extraordinary character, and his not less extraordinary adventures, a life of him appeared widely different from the catchpenny lives of

eminent men which were then a staple article of manufacture in Grub Street. The style was indeed deficient in ease and variety; and the writer was evidently too partial to the Latin element of our language. But the little work, with all its faults, was a masterpiece. No finer specimen of literary biography existed in any language, living or dead; and a discerning critic might have confidently predicted that the author was destined to be the founder of a new school of English eloquence.

The *Life of Savage* was anonymous; but it was well known in literary circles that Johnson was the writer. During the three years which followed, he produced no important work; but he was not, and indeed could not be, idle. The fame of his abilities and learning continued to grow. Warburton pronounced him a man of parts and genius; and the praise of Warburton was then no light thing. Such was Johnson's reputation that, in 1747, several eminent booksellers combined to employ him in the arduous work of preparing a Dictionary of the English Language in two folio volumes. The sum which they agreed to pay him was only fifteen hundred guineas; and out of this sum he had to pay several poor men of letters who assisted him in the humbler parts of his task.

The prospectus of the Dictionary he addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield. Chesterfield had long been celebrated for the politeness of his manners, the brilliancy of his wit, and the delicacy of his taste. He was acknowledged to be the finest speaker in the House of Lords. He had recently governed Ireland, at a momentous con-

juncture, with eminent firmness, wisdom, and humanity; and he had since become Secretary of State. He received Johnson's homage with the most winning affability, and requited it with a few guineas, bestowed doubtless in a very graceful manner, but was by no means desirous to see all his carpets blackened with the London mud, and his soups and wines thrown to right and left over the gowns of fine ladies and the waistcoats of fine gentlemen, by an absent, awkward scholar, who gave strange starts and uttered strange growls, who dressed like a scarecrow, and ate like a cormorant. During some time Johnson continued to call on his patron; but, after being repeatedly told by the porter that his lordship was not at home, took the hint, and ceased to present himself at the inhospitable door.

Johnson had flattered himself that he should have completed his Dictionary by the end of 1750; but it was not till 1755 that he at length gave his huge volumes to the world. During the seven years which he passed in the drudgery of penning definitions and marking quotations for transcription, he sought for relaxation in literary labour of a more agreeable kind. In 1749 he published the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, an excellent imitation of the *Tenth Satire of Juvenal*. It is, in truth, not easy to say whether the palm belongs to the ancient or to the modern poet. The couplets in which the fall of Wolsey is described, though lofty and sonorous, are feeble when compared with the wonderful lines which bring before us all Rome in tumult on the day of the fall of Sejanus, the

laurels on the doorposts, the white bull stalking towards the Capitol, the statues rolling down from their pedestals, the flatterers of the disgraced minister running to see him dragged with a hook through the streets, and to have a kick at his carcass before it is hurled into the Tiber. It must be owned, too, that in the concluding passage the Christian moralist has not made the most of his advantages, and has fallen decidedly short of the sublimity of his Pagan model. On the other hand, Juvenal's Hannibal must yield to Johnson's Charles; and Johnson's vigorous and pathetic enumeration of the miseries of a literary life must be allowed to be superior to Juvenal's lamentation over the fate of Demosthenes and Cicero.

For the copyright of the *Vanity of Human Wishes* Johnson received only fifteen guineas.

A few days after the publication of this poem, his tragedy, begun many years before, was brought on the stage. His pupil, David Garrick,[1] had, in 1741, made his appearance on a humble stage in Goodman's Fields, had at once risen to the first place among actors, and was now, after several years of almost uninterrupted success, manager of Drury Lane Theatre. The relation between him and his old preceptor was of a very singular kind. They repelled each other strongly, and yet attracted each other strongly. Nature had made them of very different clay; and circumstances had fully brought out the natural peculiarities of both. Sudden prosperity had turned Garrick's head. Continued adversity had soured Johnson's

[1] See note on 63: 18.

temper. Johnson saw, with more envy than became so great a man, the villa, the plate, the china, the Brussels carpet, which the little mimic had got by repeating, with grimaces and gesticulations, what wiser men had written; and the exquisitely sensitive vanity of Garrick was galled by the thought that, while all the rest of the world was applauding him, he could obtain from one morose cynic, whose opinion it was impossible to despise, scarcely any compliment not acidulated with scorn. Yet the two Lichfield men had so many early recollections in common, and sympathized with each other on so many points on which they sympathized with nobody else in the vast population of the capital, that, though the master was often provoked by the monkey-like impertinence of the pupil, and the pupil by the bearish rudeness of the master, they remained friends till they were parted by death. Garrick now brought *Irene*[1] out, with alterations sufficient to displease the author, yet not sufficient to make the piece pleasing to the audience. The public, however, listened with little emotion, but with much civility, to five acts of monotonous declamation. After nine representations the play was withdrawn. It is, indeed, altogether unsuited to the stage; and, even when perused in the closet, will be found hardly worthy of the author. He had not the slightest notion of what blank verse should be. A change in the last syllable of every other line would make the versification of the *Vanity of Human Wishes* closely re-

[1] See note on 63 : 26.

semble the versification of *Irene*. The poet, however, cleared by his benefit nights, and by the sale of the copyright of his tragedy, about three hundred pounds, then a great sum in his estimation.

About a year after the representation of *Irene*, he began to publish a series of short essays on morals, manners, and literature. This species of composition had been brought into fashion by the success of *The Tatler*, and by the still more brilliant success of *The Spectator*. A crowd of small writers had vainly attempted to rival Addison. *The Lay Monastery*, *The Censor*, *The Freethinker*, *The Plain Dealer*, *The Champion*, and other works of the same kind, had had their short day. None of them had obtained a permanent place in our literature; and they are now to be found only in the libraries of the curious. At length Johnson undertook the adventure in which so many aspirants had failed. In the thirty-sixth year after the appearance of the last number of *The Spectator*, appeared the first number of *The Rambler*. From March, 1750, to March, 1752, this paper continued to come out every Tuesday and Saturday.

From the first *The Rambler* was enthusiastically admired by a few eminent men. Richardson, when only five numbers had appeared, pronounced it equal, if not superior, to *The Spectator*. Young and Hartley expressed their approbation not less warmly. Bubb Dodington, among whose many faults indifference to the claims of genius and learning cannot be reckoned, solicited the

acquaintance of the writer. In consequence probably of the good offices of Dodington, who was then the confidential adviser of Prince Frederic, two of his Royal Highness's gentlemen carried a gracious message to the printing-office, and ordered seven copies for Leicester House. But these overtures seem to have been very coldly received. Johnson had had enough of the patronage of the great to last him all his life, and was not disposed to haunt any other door as he had haunted the door of Chesterfield.

By the public *The Rambler* was at first very coldly received. Though the price of a number was only twopence, the sale did not amount to five hundred. The profits were therefore very small. But as soon as the flying leaves were collected and reprinted they became popular. The author lived to see thirteen thousand copies spread over England alone. Separate editions were published for the Scotch and Irish markets. A large party pronounced the style perfect, so absolutely perfect that in some essays it would be impossible for the writer himself to alter a single word for the better. Another party, not less numerous, vehemently accused him of having corrupted the purity of the English tongue. The best critics admitted that his diction was too monotonous, too obviously artificial, and now and then turgid even to absurdity. But they did justice to the acuteness of his observations on morals and manners, to the constant precision and frequent brilliancy of his language, to the weighty and

magnificent eloquence of many serious passages, and to the solemn yet pleasing humour of some of the lighter papers. On the question of precedence between Addison and Johnson, a question which, seventy years ago, was much disputed, posterity has pronounced a decision from which there is no appeal. Sir Roger, his chaplain and his butler, Will Wimble and Will Honeycombe, the Vision of Mirza, the Journal of the Retired Citizen, the Everlasting Club, the Dunmow Flitch, the Loves of Hilpah and Shalum, the Visit to the Exchange, and the Visit to the Abbey, are known to everybody. But many men and women, even of highly cultivated minds, are unacquainted with Squire Bluster and Mrs. Busy, Quisquilius and Venustulus, the Allegory of Wit and Learning, the Chronicle of the Revolutions of a Garret, and the sad fate of Aningait and Ajut.

The last *Rambler* was written in a sad and gloomy hour. Mrs. Johnson had been given over by the physicians. Three days later she died. She left her husband almost broken-hearted. Many people have been surprised to see a man of his genius and learning stooping to every drudgery, and denying himself almost every comfort, for the purpose of supplying a silly, affected old woman with superfluities, which she accepted with but little gratitude. But all his affection had been concentrated on her. He had neither brother nor sister, neither son nor daughter. To him she was beautiful as the Gunnings, and witty as Lady Mary. Her opinion of his writings was more important to him than the

voice of the pit of Drury Lane Theatre or the judgement of *The Monthly Review*. The chief support which had sustained him through the most arduous labour of his life was the hope that she would enjoy the fame and the profit which he anticipated from his Dictionary. She was gone; and in that vast labyrinth of streets, peopled by eight hundred thousand human beings, he was alone. Yet it was necessary for him to set himself, as he expressed it, doggedly to work. After three more laborious years, the Dictionary was at length complete.

It had been generally supposed that this great work would be dedicated to the eloquent and accomplished nobleman to whom the prospectus had been addressed. He well knew the value of such a compliment; and therefore, when the day of publication drew near, he exerted himself to soothe, by a show of zealous and at the same time of delicate and judicious kindness, the pride which he had so cruelly wounded. Since the *Ramblers* had ceased to appear, the town had been entertained by a journal called *The World*, to which many men of high rank and fashion contributed. In two successive numbers of *The World* the Dictionary was, to use the modern phrase, puffed with wonderful skill. The writings of Johnson were warmly praised. It was proposed that he should be invested with the authority of a Dictator, nay, of a Pope, over our language, and that his decisions about the meaning and the spelling of words should be received as final. His two folios, it was said, would of course be bought by

everybody who could afford to buy them. It was soon known that these papers were written by Chesterfield. But the just resentment of Johnson was not to be so appeased. In a letter written with singular energy and dignity of thought and language, he repelled the tardy advances of his patron. The Dictionary came forth without a dedication. In the preface the author truly declared that he owed nothing to the great, and described the difficulties with which he had been left to struggle so forcibly and pathetically, that the ablest and most malevolent of all the enemies of his fame, Horne Tooke, never could read that passage without tears.

The public, on this occasion, did Johnson full justice, and something more than justice. The best lexicographer may well be content if his productions are received by the world with cold esteem. But Johnson's Dictionary was hailed with an enthusiasm such as no similar work has ever excited. It was, indeed, the first dictionary which could be read with pleasure. The definitions show so much acuteness of thought and command of language, and the passages quoted from poets, divines, and philosophers, are so skilfully selected, that a leisure hour may always be very agreeably spent in turning over the pages. The faults of the book resolve themselves, for the most part, into one great fault. Johnson was a wretched etymologist.[1] He knew little or nothing of any Teutonic language except English, which, indeed, as he wrote it, was scarcely a Teutonic

[1] See note on 81 : 11.

language; and thus he was absolutely at the mercy of Junius and Skinner.

The Dictionary, though it raised Johnson's fame, added nothing to his pecuniary means. The fifteen hundred guineas which the booksellers had agreed to pay him had been advanced and spent before the last sheets issued from the press. It is painful to relate that, twice in the course of the year which followed the publication of this great work, he was arrested and carried to spunging-houses, and that he was twice indebted for his liberty to his excellent friend Richardson.[1] It was still necessary for the man who had been formally saluted by the highest authority as Dictator of the English language to supply his wants by constant toil. He abridged his Dictionary. He proposed to bring out an edition of Shakespeare by subscription; and many subscribers sent in their names, and laid down their money. But he soon found the task so little to his taste, that he turned to more attractive employments. He contributed many papers to a new monthly journal, which was called *The Literary Magazine*. Few of these papers have much interest; but among them was the very best thing that he ever wrote, a masterpiece both of reasoning and of satirical pleasantry, the review of Jenyns's *Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil*.

In the spring of 1758 Johnson put forth the first of a series of essays, entitled *The Idler*. During two years these essays continued to appear weekly. They were

[1] See note on 77: 24.

eagerly read, widely circulated, and, indeed, impudently pirated, while they were still in the original form, and had a large sale when collected into volumes. *The Idler* may be described as a second part of *The Rambler*, somewhat livelier and somewhat weaker than the first part.

While Johnson was busied with his *Idlers*, his mother, who had accomplished her ninetieth year, died at Lichfield. It was long since he had seen her; but he had not failed to contribute largely, out of his small means, to her comfort. In order to defray the charges of her funeral, and to pay some debts which she had left, he wrote a little book in a single week, and sent off the sheets to the press without reading them over. A hundred pounds were paid him for the copyright; and the purchasers had great cause to be pleased with their bargain; for the book was *Rasselas*.

The success of *Rasselas* was great, though such ladies as Miss Lydia Languish must have been grievously disappointed when they found that the new volume from the circulating library was little more than a dissertation on the author's favourite theme, the Vanity of Human Wishes; that the Prince of Abyssinia was without a mistress, and the Princess without a lover; and that the story set the hero and the heroine down exactly where it had taken them up. The style was the subject of much eager controversy. *The Monthly Review* and *The Critical Review* took different sides. Many readers pronounced the writer a pompous pedant,

who would never use a word of two syllables where it was possible to use a word of six, and who could not make a waiting-woman relate her adventures without balancing every noun with another noun, and every epithet with another epithet. Another party, not less zealous, cited with delight numerous passages in which weighty meaning was expressed with accuracy and illustrated with splendour. And both the censure and the praise were merited.

About the plan of *Rasselas* little was said by the critics; and yet the faults of the plan might seem to invite severe criticism. Johnson has frequently blamed Shakespeare for neglecting the proprieties of time and place, and for ascribing to one age or nation the manners and opinions of another. Yet Shakespeare has not sinned in this way more grievously than Johnson. Rasselas and Imlac, Nekayah and Pekuah[1] are evidently meant to be Abyssinians of the eighteenth century: for the Europe which Imlac describes is the Europe of the eighteenth century; and the inmates of the Happy Valley[2] talk familiarly of that law of gravitation which Newton discovered, and which was not fully received even at Cambridge till the eighteenth century. What a real company of Abyssinians would have been may be learned from *Bruce's Travels*. But Johnson, not content with turning filthy savages, ignorant of their letters, and gorged with raw steaks cut from living cows, into philosophers as eloquent and

[1] Characters in *Rasselas*.

[2] The scene of *Rasselas*.

enlightened as himself or his friend Burke, and into ladies as highly accomplished as Mrs. Lennox or Mrs. Sheridan, transferred the whole domestic system of England to Egypt. Into a land of harems, a land of polygamy, a land where women are married without ever being seen, he introduced the flirtations and jealousies of our ball-rooms. In a land where there is boundless liberty of divorce, wedlock is described as the indissoluble compact. "A youth and maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of each other. Such," says Rasselas, "is the common process of marriage." Such it may have been, and may still be, in London, but assuredly not at Cairo. A writer who was guilty of such improprieties had little right to blame the poet who made Hector quote Aristotle, and represented Julio Romano as flourishing in the days of the oracle of Delphi.

By such exertions as have been described, Johnson supported himself till the year 1762. In that year a great change in his circumstances took place. He had from a child been an enemy of the reigning dynasty. His Jacobite prejudices had been exhibited with little disguise both in his works and in his conversation. Even in his massy and elaborate Dictionary, he had, with a strange want of taste and judgement, inserted bitter and contumelious reflections on the Whig party.[1] The excise,[2] which was a favourite resource of Whig

[1] See note on 67 : 25. [2] See note on 69 : 5.

financiers, he had designated as a hateful tax. He had railed against the commissioners of excise in language so coarse that they had seriously thought of prosecuting him. He had with difficulty been prevented from holding up the Lord Privy Seal by name as an example of the meaning of the word "renegade." A pension he had defined as pay given to a state hireling to betray his country; a pensioner as a slave of state hired by a stipend to obey a master. It seemed unlikely that the author of these definitions would himself be pensioned. But that was a time of wonders. George the Third had ascended the throne; and had, in the course of a few months, disgusted many of the old friends, and conciliated many of the old enemies of his house. The city was becoming mutinous. Oxford was becoming loyal. Cavendishes and Bentincks were murmuring. Somersets and Wyndhams were hastening to kiss hands. The head of the treasury was now Lord Bute, who was a Tory, and could have no objection to Johnson's Toryism. Bute wished to be thought a patron of men of letters; and Johnson was one of the most eminent and one of the most needy men of letters in Europe. A pension of three hundred a year was graciously offered, and with very little hesitation accepted. This event produced a change in Johnson's whole way of life. For the first time since his boyhood he no longer felt the daily goad urging him to the daily toil. He was at liberty, after thirty years of anxiety and drudgery, to indulge his constitutional indolence, to lie

in bed till two in the afternoon, and to sit up talking till four in the morning, without fearing either the printer's devil or the sheriff's officer.

One laborious task indeed he had bound himself to perform. He had received large subscriptions for his promised edition of Shakespeare; he had lived on those subscriptions during some years; and he could not without disgrace omit to perform his part of the contract. His friends repeatedly exhorted him to make an effort; and he repeatedly resolved to do so. But, notwithstanding their exhortations and his resolutions, month followed month, year followed year, and nothing was done. He prayed fervently against his idleness; he determined, as often as he received the sacrament, that he would no longer doze away and trifle away his time; but the spell under which he lay resisted prayer and sacrament. His private notes at this time are made up of self-reproaches. "My indolence," he wrote on Easter Eve in 1764, "has sunk into grosser sluggishness. A kind of strange oblivion has overspread me, so that I know not what has become of the last year." Easter, 1765, came, and found him still in the same state. "My time," he wrote, "has been unprofitably spent, and seems as a dream that has left nothing behind. My memory grows confused, and I know not how the days pass over me." Happily for his honour, the charm which held him captive was at length broken by no gentle or friendly hand. He had been weak enough to pay serious attention to a story about a ghost

which haunted a house in Cock Lane, and had actually gone himself, with some of his friends, at one in the morning, to St. John's Church, Clerkenwell, in the hope of receiving a communication from the perturbed spirit. But the spirit, though adjured with all solemnity, remained obstinately silent; and it soon appeared that a naughty girl of eleven had been amusing herself by making fools of so many philosophers. Churchill, who, confident in his powers, drunk with popularity, and burning with party spirit, was looking for some man of established fame and Tory politics to insult, celebrated the Cock Lane Ghost in three cantos, nicknamed Johnson Pomposo, asked where the book was which had been so long promised and so liberally paid for, and directly accused the great moralist of cheating. This terrible word proved effectual; and in October, 1765, appeared, after a delay of nine years, the new edition of Shakespeare.

This publication saved Johnson's character for honesty, but added nothing to the fame of his abilities and learning. The preface, though it contains some good passages, is not in his best manner. The most valuable notes are those in which he had an opportunity of showing how attentively he had during many years observed human life and human nature. The best specimen is the note on the character of Polonius. Nothing so good is to be found even in Wilhelm Meister's admirable examination of *Hamlet*. But here praise must end. It would be difficult to name a more slovenly, a more worthless, edition of any great classic. The reader

may turn over play after play without finding one happy conjectural emendation, or one ingenious and satisfactory explanation of a passage which had baffled preceding commentators. Johnson had, in his prospectus, told the world that he was peculiarly fitted for the task which he had undertaken, because he had, as a lexicographer, been under the necessity of taking a wider view of the English language than any of his predecessors. That his knowledge of our literature was extensive is indisputable. But, unfortunately, he had altogether neglected that very part of our literature with which it is especially desirable that an editor of Shakespeare should be conversant. It is dangerous to assert a negative. Yet little will be risked by the assertion, that in the two folio volumes of the English Dictionary there is not a single passage quoted from any dramatist of the Elizabethan age, except Shakespeare and Ben.[1] Even from Ben the quotations are few. Johnson might easily, in a few months, have made himself well acquainted with every old play that was extant. But it never seems to have occurred to him that this was a necessary preparation for the work which he had undertaken. He would doubtless have admitted that it would be the height of absurdity in a man who was not familiar with the works of Æschylus and Euripides to publish an edition of Sophocles. Yet he ventured to publish an edition of Shakespeare, without having ever in his life, as far as can be discovered, read a single

[1] Jonson.

scene of Massinger, Ford, Decker, Webster, Marlowe, Beaumont, or Fletcher. His detractors were noisy and scurrilous. Those who most loved and honoured him had little to say in praise of the manner in which he had discharged the duty of a commentator. He had, however, acquitted himself of a debt which had long lain heavy on his conscience; and he sank back into the repose from which the sting of satire had roused him. He long continued to live upon the fame which he had already won. He was honoured by the University of Oxford with a Doctor's degree, by the Royal Academy with a professorship, and by the King with an interview, in which his Majesty most graciously expressed a hope that so excellent a writer would not cease to write. In the interval, however, between 1765 and 1775 Johnson published only two or three political tracts, the longest of which he could have produced in forty-eight hours, if he had worked as he worked on the *Life of Savage* and on *Rasselas*.

But, though his pen was now idle, his tongue was active. The influence exercised by his conversation, directly upon those with whom he lived, and indirectly on the whole literary world, was altogether without a parallel. His colloquial talents were indeed of the highest order. He had strong sense, quick discernment, wit, humour, immense knowledge of literature and of life, and an infinite store of curious anecdotes. As respected style, he spoke far better than he wrote. Every sentence which dropped from his lips was as

correct in structure as the most nicely balanced period of *The Rambler*. But in his talk there were no pompous triads, and little more than a fair proportion of words in *osity* and *ation*. All was simplicity, ease, and vigour. He uttered his short, weighty, and pointed sentences with a power of voice, and a justness and energy of emphasis, of which the effect was rather increased than diminished by the rollings of his huge form, and by the asthmatic gaspings and puffings in which the peals of his eloquence generally ended. Nor did the laziness which made him unwilling to sit down to his desk prevent him from giving instruction or entertainment orally. To discuss questions of taste, of learning, of casuistry, in language so exact and so forcible that it might have been printed without the alteration of a word, was to him no exertion, but a pleasure. He loved, as he said, to fold his legs and have his talk out. He was ready to bestow the overflowings of his full mind on anybody who would start a subject; on a fellow-passenger in a stage-coach, or on the person who sate at the same table with him in an eating-house. But his conversation was nowhere so brilliant and striking as when he was surrounded by a few friends, whose abilities and knowledge enabled them, as he once expressed it, to send him back every ball that he threw. Some of these, in 1764, formed themselves into a club, which gradually became a formidable power in the commonwealth of letters. The verdicts pronounced by this conclave on new books were speedily known over all London, and were

sufficient to sell off a whole edition in a day, or to condemn the sheets to the service of the trunk-maker and the pastry-cook. Nor shall we think this strange when we consider what great and various talents and acquirements met in the little fraternity. Goldsmith was the representative of poetry and light literature, Reynolds of the arts, Burke of political eloquence and political philosophy. There, too, were Gibbon, the greatest historian, and Jones, the greatest linguist, of the age. Garrick brought to the meetings his inexhaustible pleasantry, his incomparable mimicry, and his consummate knowledge of stage effect. Among the most constant attendants were two high-born and high-bred gentlemen, closely bound together by friendship, but of widely different characters and habits; Bennet Langton, distinguished by his skill in Greek literature, by the orthodoxy of his opinions, and by the sanctity of his life; and Topham Beauclerk, renowned for his amours, his knowledge of the gay world, his fastidious taste, and his sarcastic wit. To predominate over such a society was not easy. Yet even over such a society Johnson predominated. Burke might indeed have disputed the supremacy to which others were under the necessity of submitting. But Burke, though not generally a very patient listener, was content to take the second part when Johnson was present; and the club itself, consisting of so many eminent men, is to this day popularly designated as Johnson's Club.

Among the members of this celebrated body was one

to whom it has owed the greater part of its celebrity, yet who was regarded with little respect by his brethren, and had not without difficulty obtained a seat among them. This was James Boswell, a young Scotch lawyer, heir to an honourable name and a fair estate. That he was a coxcomb and a bore, weak, vain, pushing, curious, garrulous, was obvious to all who were acquainted with him. That he could not reason, that he had no wit, no humour, no eloquence, is apparent from his writings. And yet his writings are read beyond the Mississippi, and under the Southern Cross, and are likely to be read as long as the English exists, either as a living or as a dead language. Nature had made him a slave and an idolater. His mind resembled those creepers which the botanists call parasites, and which can subsist only by clinging round the stems and imbibing the juices of stronger plants. He must have fastened himself on somebody. He might have fastened himself on Wilkes, and have become the fiercest patriot in the Bill of Rights Society. He might have fastened himself on Whitefield, and have become the loudest field preacher among the Calvinistic Methodists. In a happy hour he fastened himself on Johnson. The pair might seem ill matched. For Johnson had early been prejudiced against Boswell's country. To a man of Johnson's strong understanding and irritable temper, the silly egotism and adulation of Boswell must have been as teasing as the constant buzz of a fly. Johnson hated to be questioned; and Boswell was eternally catechising him on all kinds of sub-

jects, and sometimes propounded such questions as "What would you do, sir, if you were locked up in a tower with a baby?" Johnson was a water-drinker; and Boswell was a wine-bibber, and indeed little better than a habitual sot. It was impossible that there should be perfect harmony between two such companions. Indeed, the great man was sometimes provoked into fits of passion, in which he said things which the small man, during a few hours, seriously resented. Every quarrel, however, was soon made up. During twenty years the disciple continued to worship the master: the master continued to scold the disciple, to sneer at him, and to love him. The two friends ordinarily resided at a great distance from each other. Boswell practised in the Parliament House of Edinburgh, and could pay only occasional visits to London. During those visits his chief business was to watch Johnson, to discover all Johnson's habits, to turn the conversation to subjects about which Johnson was likely to say something remarkable, and to fill quarto note books with minutes of what Johnson had said. In this way were gathered the materials out of which was afterward constructed the most interesting biographical work in the world.

Soon after the club began to exist, Johnson formed a connexion less important indeed to his fame, but much more important to his happiness, than his connexion with Boswell. Henry Thrale, one of the most opulent brewers in the kingdom, a man of sound and cultivated understanding, rigid principles, and liberal spirit, was

married to one of those clever, kind-hearted, engaging, vain, pert young women, who are perpetually doing or saying what is not exactly right, but who, do or say what they may, are always agreeable. In 1765 the Thrales became acquainted with Johnson; and the acquaintance ripened fast into friendship. They were astonished and delighted by the brilliancy of his conversation. They were flattered by finding that a man so widely celebrated preferred their house to any other in London. Even the peculiarities which seemed to unfit him for civilized society, his gesticulations, his rollings, his puffings, his mutterings, the strange way in which he put on his clothes, the ravenous eagerness with which he devoured his dinner, his fits of melancholy, his fits of anger, his frequent rudeness, his occasional ferocity, increased the interest which his new associates took in him. For these things were the cruel marks left behind by a life which had been one long conflict with disease and adversity. In a vulgar hack writer, such oddities would have excited only disgust. But in a man of genius, learning, and virtue their effect was to add pity to admiration and esteem. Johnson soon had an apartment at the brewery in Southwark, and a still more pleasant apartment at the villa of his friends on Streatham Common. A large part of every year he passed in those abodes, abodes which must have seemed magnificent and luxurious indeed, when compared with the dens in which he had generally been lodged. But his chief pleasures were derived from what the astronomer of

his Abyssinian tale called "the endearing elegance of female friendship." Mrs. Thrale rallied him, soothed him, coaxed him; and, if she sometimes provoked him by her flippancy, made ample amends by listening to his reproofs with angelic sweetness of temper. When he was diseased in body and in mind, she was the most tender of nurses. No comfort that wealth could purchase, no contrivance that womanly ingenuity, set to work by womanly compassion, could devise, was wanting to his sick room. He requited her kindness by an affection pure as the affection of a father, yet delicately tinged with a gallantry, which, though awkward, must have been more flattering than the attentions of a crowd of the fools who gloried in the names, now obsolete, of Buck and Macaroni. It should seem that a full half of Johnson's life, during about sixteen years, was passed under the roof of the Thrales. He accompanied the family sometimes to Bath, and sometimes to Brighton, once to Wales, and once to Paris. But he had at the same time a house in one of the narrow and gloomy courts on the north of Fleet Street. In the garrets was his library, a large and miscellaneous collection of books, falling to pieces and begrimed with dust. On a lower floor he sometimes, but very rarely, regaled a friend with a plain dinner, a veal pie, or a leg of lamb and spinage, and a rice pudding. Nor was the dwelling uninhabited during his long absences. It was the home of the most extraordinary assemblage of inmates that ever was brought together. At the head of the

establishment Johnson had placed an old lady named Williams, whose chief recommendations were her blindness and her poverty. But, in spite of her murmurs and reproaches, he gave an asylum to another lady who was as poor as herself, Mrs. Desmoulins, whose family he had known many years before in Staffordshire. Room was found for the daughter of Mrs. Desmoulins, and for another destitute damsel, who was generally addressed as Miss Carmichael, but whom her generous host called Polly. An old quack doctor named Levett, who bled and dosed coal-heavers and hackney coachmen, and received for fees crusts of bread, bits of bacon, glasses of gin, and sometimes a little copper, completed this strange menagerie. All these poor creatures were at constant war with each other, and with Johnson's negro servant Frank. Sometimes, indeed, they transferred their hostilities from the servant to the master, complained that a better table was not kept for them, and railed or maundered till their benefactor was glad to make his escape to Streatham, or to the Mitre Tavern. And yet he, who was generally the haughtiest and most irritable of mankind, who was but too prompt to resent anything which looked like a slight on the part of a purse-proud bookseller, or of a noble and powerful patron, bore patiently from mendicants, who, but for his bounty, must have gone to the workhouse, insults more provoking than those for which he had knocked down Osborne and bidden defiance to Chesterfield. Year after year

Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins, Polly and Levett, continued to torment him and to live upon him.

The course of life which has been described was interrupted in Johnson's sixty-fourth year by an important event. He had early read an account of the Hebrides, and had been much interested by learning that there was so near him a land peopled by a race which was still as rude and simple as in the Middle Ages. A wish to become intimately acquainted with a state of society so utterly unlike all that he had ever seen frequently crossed his mind. But it is not probable that his curiosity would have overcome his habitual sluggishness, and his love of the smoke, the mud, and the cries of London, had not Boswell importuned him to attempt the adventure, and offered to be his squire.[1] At length, in August, 1773, Johnson crossed the Highland line, and plunged courageously into what was then considered, by most Englishmen, as a dreary and perilous wilderness. After wandering about two months through the Celtic region, sometimes in rude boats which did not protect him from the rain, and sometimes on small shaggy ponies which could hardly bear his weight, he returned to his old haunts with a mind full of new images and new theories. During the following year he employed himself in recording his adventures. About the beginning of 1775, his *Journey to the Hebrides* was published, and was, during some weeks, the chief subject of conversation in all

[1] Guide and attendant.

circles in which any attention was paid to literature. The book is still read with pleasure. The narrative is entertaining; the speculations, whether sound or unsound, are always ingenious; and the style, though too stiff and pompous, is somewhat easier and more graceful than that of his early writings. His prejudice against the Scotch had at length become little more than matter of jest; and whatever remained of the old feeling had been effectually removed by the kind and respectful hospitality with which he had been received in every part of Scotland. It was, of course, not to be expected that an Oxonian Tory should praise the Presbyterian polity and ritual, or that an eye accustomed to the hedgerows and parks of England should not be struck by the bareness of Berwickshire and East Lothian. But even in censure Johnson's tone is not unfriendly. The most enlightened Scotchmen, with Lord Mansfield at their head, were well pleased. But some foolish and ignorant Scotchmen were moved to anger by a little unpalatable truth which was mingled with much eulogy, and assailed him, whom they chose to consider as the enemy of their country, with libels much more dishonourable to their country, than anything that he had ever said or written. They published paragraphs in the newspapers, articles in the magazines, sixpenny pamphlets, five-shilling books. One scribbler abused Johnson for being blear-eyed; another for being a pensioner; a third informed the world that one of the Doctor's uncles had been convicted of felony in

Scotland, and had found that there was in that country one tree capable of supporting the weight of an Englishman. Macpherson, whose *Fingal* had been proved in the *Journey* to be an impudent forgery, threatened to take vengeance with a cane. The only effect of this threat was that Johnson reiterated the charge of forgery in the most contemptuous terms, and walked about, during some time, with a cudgel, which, if the impostor had not been too wise to encounter it, would assuredly have descended upon him, to borrow the sublime language of his own epic poem, "like a hammer on the red sun of the furnace."

Of other assailants Johnson took no notice whatever. He had early resolved never to be drawn into controversy; and he adhered to his resolution with a steadfastness which is the more extraordinary, because he was, both intellectually and morally, of the stuff of which controversialists are made. In conversation, he was a singularly eager, acute, and pertinacious disputant. When at a loss for good reasons, he had recourse to sophistry; and, when heated by altercation, he made unsparing use of sarcasm and invective. But, when he took his pen in his hand, his whole character seemed to be changed. A hundred bad writers misrepresented him and reviled him; but not one of the hundred could boast of having been thought by him worthy of a refutation, or even of a retort. The Kenricks, Campbells, MacNicols, and Hendersons, did their best to annoy him, in the hope that he would give them importance

by answering them. But the reader will in vain search his works for any allusion to Kenrick or Campbell, to MacNicol or Henderson. One Scotchman, bent on vindicating the fame of Scotch learning, defied him to the combat in a detestable Latin hexameter:

Maxime, si tu vis, cupio contendere tecum.

But Johnson took no notice of the challenge. He had learned, both from his own observation and from literary history, in which he was deeply read, that the place of books in the public estimation is fixed, not by what is written about them, but by what is written in them; and that an author whose works are likely to live is very unwise if he stoops to wrangle with detractors whose works are certain to die. He always maintained that fame was a shuttlecock which could be kept up only by being beaten back, as well as beaten forward, and which would soon fall if there were only one battledore. No saying was oftener in his mouth than that fine apothegm of Bentley, that no man was ever written down but by himself.

Unhappily, a few months after the appearance of the *Journey to the Hebrides* Johnson did what none of his envious assailants could have done, and to a certain extent succeeded in writing himself down. The disputes between England and her American colonies had reached a point at which no amicable adjustment was possible. Civil war was evidently impending; and the ministers seem to have thought that the eloquence of

Johnson might with advantage be employed to inflame the nation against the opposition here, and against the rebels beyond the Atlantic. He had already written two or three tracts in defence of the foreign and domestic policy of the government; and those tracts, though hardly worthy of him, were much superior to the crowd of pamphlets which lay on the counters of Almon and Stockdale. But his *Taxation No Tyranny* was a pitiable failure. The very title was a silly phrase, which can have been recommended to his choice by nothing but a jingling alliteration which he ought to have despised. The arguments were such as boys use in debating societies. The pleasantry was as awkward as the gambols of a hippopotamus. Even Boswell was forced to own that, in this unfortunate piece, he could detect no trace of his master's powers. The general opinion was that the strong faculties which had produced the Dictionary and *The Rambler* were beginning to feel the effect of time and of disease, and that the old man would best consult his credit by writing no more.

But this was a great mistake. Johnson had failed, not because his mind was less vigorous than when he wrote *Rasselas* in the evenings of a week, but because he had foolishly chosen, or suffered others to choose for him, a subject such as he would at no time have been competent to treat. He was in no sense a statesman. He never willingly read or thought or talked about affairs of state. He loved biography, literary history, the history of manners; but political history was posi-

tively distasteful to him. The question at issue between the colonies and the mother country was a question about which he had really nothing to say. He failed, therefore, as the greatest men must fail when they attempt to do that for which they are unfit; as Burke would have failed if Burke had tried to write comedies like those of Sheridan; as Reynolds would have failed if Reynolds had tried to paint landscapes like those of Wilson. Happily, Johnson soon had an opportunity of proving most signally that his failure was not to be ascribed to intellectual decay.

On Easter Eve, 1777, some persons, deputed by a meeting which consisted of forty of the first booksellers in London, called upon him. Though he had some scruples about doing business at that season, he received his visitors with much civility. They came to inform him that a new edition of the English poets, from Cowley downwards, was in contemplation, and to ask him to furnish short biographical prefaces. He readily undertook the task, a task for which he was pre-eminently qualified. His knowledge of the literary history of England since the Restoration was unrivalled. That knowledge he had derived partly from books, and partly from sources which had long been closed; from old Grub Street[1] traditions; from the talk of forgotten poetasters and pamphleteers who had long been lying in parish vaults; from the recollections of such men as Gilbert Walmesley,[2] who had conversed with the wits of

[1] See note on 73 : 2. [2] See note on 61 : 20.

Button's; Cibber, who had mutilated the plays of two generations of dramatists; Orrery, who had been admitted to the society of Swift; and Savage, who had rendered services of no very honourable kind to Pope. The biographer therefore sat down to his task with a mind full of matter. He had at first intended to give only a paragraph to every minor poet, and only four or five pages to the greatest name. But the flood of anecdote and criticism overflowed the narrow channel. The work, which was originally meant to consist only of a few sheets, swelled into ten volumes, small volumes, it is true, and not closely printed. The first four appeared in 1779, the remaining six in 1781.

The *Lives of the Poets* are, on the whole, the best of Johnson's works. The narratives are as entertaining as any novel. The remarks on life and on human nature are eminently shrewd and profound. The criticisms are often excellent, and, even when grossly and provokingly unjust, well deserve to be studied. For, however erroneous they may be, they are never silly. They are the judgements of a mind trammelled by prejudice and deficient in sensibility, but vigorous and acute. They therefore generally contain a portion of valuable truth which deserves to be separated from the alloy; and, at the very worst, they mean something, a praise to which much of what is called criticism in our time has no pretensions.

Savage's Life Johnson reprinted nearly as it had appeared in 1744. Whoever, after reading that Life, will

turn to the other Lives, will be struck by the difference of style. Since Johnson had been at ease in his circumstances he had written little and had talked much. When, therefore, he, after the lapse of years, resumed his pen, the mannerism which he had contracted while he was in the constant habit of elaborate composition, was less perceptible than formerly; and his diction frequently had a colloquial ease which it had formerly wanted. The improvement may be discerned by a skilful critic in the *Journey to the Hebrides*, and in the *Lives of the Poets* [it] is so obvious that it cannot escape the notice of the most careless reader.

Among the Lives the best are perhaps those of Crowley, Dryden, and Pope. The very worst is, beyond all doubt, that of Gray.

This great work at once became popular. There was, indeed, much just and much unjust censure: but even those who were loudest in blame were attracted by the book in spite of themselves. Malone computed the gains of the publishers at five or six thousand pounds. But the writer was very poorly remunerated. Intending at first to write very short prefaces, he had stipulated for only two hundred guineas. The booksellers, when they saw how far his performance had surpassed his promise, added only another hundred. Indeed, Johnson, though he did not despise, or affect to despise, money, and though his strong sense and long experience ought to have qualified him to protect his own interests, seems to have been singularly unskilful and unlucky in his

literary bargains. He was generally reputed the first English writer of his time. Yet several writers of his time sold their copyrights for sums such as he never ventured to ask. To give a single instance, Robertson received four thousand five hundred pounds for the *History of Charles V;* and it is no disrespect to the memory of Robertson to say that the *History of Charles V* is both a less valuable and a less amusing book than the *Lives of the Poets*.

Johnson was now in his seventy-second year. The infirmities of age were coming fast upon him. That inevitable event of which he never thought without horror[1] was brought near to him; and his whole life was darkened by the shadow of death. He had often to pay the cruel price of longevity. Every year he lost what could never be replaced. The strange dependents to whom he had given shelter, and to whom, in spite of their faults, he was strongly attached by habit, dropped off one by one; and, in the silence of his home, he regretted even the noise of their scolding matches. The kind and generous Thrale was no more; and it would have been well if his wife had been laid beside him. But she survived to be the laughing-stock of those who had envied her, and to draw from the eyes of the old man who had loved her beyond anything in the world tears far more bitter than he would have shed over her grave. With some estimable and many agreeable qualities, she was not made to be independent. The control of a

[1] See note on 61 : 1.

mind more steadfast than her own was necessary to her respectability. While she was restrained by her husband, a man of sense and firmness, indulgent to her taste in trifles, but always the undisputed master of his house, her worst offences had been impertinent jokes, white lies, and short fits of pettishness ending in sunny good humour. But he was gone; and she was left an opulent widow of forty, with strong sensibility, volatile fancy, and slender judgement. She soon fell in love with a music-master from Brescia, in whom nobody but herself could discover anything to admire. Her pride, and perhaps some bitter feelings, struggled hard against this degrading passion. But the struggle irritated her nerves, soured her temper, and at length endangered her health. Conscious that her choice was one which Johnson could not approve, she became desirous to escape from his inspection. Her manner toward him changed. She was sometimes cold and sometimes petulant. She did not conceal her joy when he left Streatham; she never pressed him to return; and, if he came unbidden, she received him in a manner which convinced him that he was no longer a welcome guest. He took the very intelligible hints which she gave. He read, for the last time, a chapter of the Greek Testament in the library which had been formed by himself. In a solemn and tender prayer he commended the house and its inmates to the Divine protection, and, with emotions which choked his voice and convulsed his powerful frame, left forever that beloved home for the gloomy

and desolate house behind Fleet Street, where the few and evil days which still remained to him were to run out. Here, in June, 1783, he had a paralytic stroke, from which, however, he recovered, and which does not appear to have at all impaired his intellectual faculties. But other maladies came thick upon him. His asthma tormented him day and night. Dropsical symptoms made their appearance. While sinking under a complication of diseases, he heard that the woman whose friendship had been the chief happiness of sixteen years of his life had married an Italian fiddler; that all London was crying shame upon her; and that the newspapers and magazines were filled with allusions to the Ephesian matron and the two pictures in *Hamlet*. He vehemently said that he would try to forget her existence. He never uttered her name. Every memorial of her which met his eye he flung into the fire. She meanwhile fled from the laughter and hisses of her countrymen and countrywomen to a land where she was unknown, hastened across Mount Cenis, and learned, while passing a merry Christmas of concerts and lemonade parties at Milan, that the great man with whose name hers is inseparably associated had ceased to exist.

He had, in spite of much mental and much bodily affliction, clung vehemently to life. The feeling described in that fine but gloomy paper which closes the series of his *Idlers*, seemed to grow stronger in him as his last hour drew near. He fancied that he should be able to draw his breath more easily in a southern

climate, and would probably have set out for Rome and Naples but for his fear of the expense of the journey. That expense, indeed, he had the means of defraying; for he had laid up about two thousand pounds, the fruit of labours which had made the fortune of several publishers. But he was unwilling to break in upon this hoard; and he seems to have wished even to keep its existence a secret. Some of his friends hoped that the government might be induced to increase his pension to six hundred pounds a year: but this hope was disappointed, and he resolved to stand one English winter more. That winter was his last. His legs grew weaker; his breath grew shorter; the fatal water gathered fast, in spite of incisions which he, courageous against pain, but timid against death, urged his surgeons to make deeper and deeper. Though the tender care which had mitigated his sufferings during months of sickness at Streatham was withdrawn, he was not left desolate. The ablest physicians and surgeons attended him, and refused to accept fees from him. Burke parted from him with emotion. Windham sat much in the sick-room, arranged the pillows, and sent his own servant to watch at night by the bed. Frances Burney, whom the old man had cherished with fatherly kindness, stood weeping at the door; while Langton,[1] whose piety eminently qualified him to be an adviser and comforter at such a time, received the last pressure of his friend's hand within. When at length

[1] See note on 92: 15.

the moment, dreaded through so many years, came close, the dark cloud passed away from Johnson's mind. His temper became unusually patient and gentle; he ceased to think with terror of death, and of that which lies beyond death; and he spoke much of the mercy of God, and of the propitiation of Christ. In this serene frame of mind he died on the 13th of December, 1784. He was laid, a week later, in Westminster Abbey, among the eminent men of whom he had been the historian, — Cowley[1] and Denham, Dryden and Congreve, Gay,[2] Prior, and Addison.

Since his death, the popularity of his works — the *Lives of the Poets* and, perhaps, the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, excepted — has greatly diminished. His Dictionary has been altered by editors till it can scarcely be called his. An allusion to his *Rambler* or his *Idler* is not readily apprehended in literary circles. The fame even of *Rasselas* has grown somewhat dim. But, though the celebrity of the writings may have declined, the celebrity of the writer, strange to say, is as great as ever. Boswell's book has done for him more than the best of his own books could do. The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works. But the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive. The old philosopher is still among us in the brown coat with the metal buttons, and the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, and swal-

[1] See note on 103: 18. [2] See note on 64: 25.

lowing his tea in oceans. No human being who has been more than seventy years in the grave is so well known to us. And it is but just to say that our intimate acquaintance with what he would himself have called the anfractuosities[1] of his intellect and of his temper, serves only to strengthen our conviction that he was both a great and a good man.

[1] Windings and turnings.

THE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF MACAULAY'S STYLE

1. **Fondness for Contrast.**—As Pope is the most antithetical of English poets, so Macaulay is the most antithetical of the great writers of English prose. But this trait is carried much farther by Macaulay than by Pope. The prose writer is not content with such forms of balance and antithesis as are so common in Johnson. He continually leads his reader to expect a particular conclusion, only to give him a sort of electric shock by naming an opposite conclusion. It is what Minto so aptly calls "the rattling fireworks of Macaulay's style." While this device is exceedingly effective in that popular oratory which "gets things done," it is liable to abuse. Too much of it is like a repast seasoned too highly with pepper-sauce and similar relishes. That Macaulay recognized this danger appears in an extract from his journal, written near the end of his life, when his literary fame had become world-wide. In referring to an attempted imitation of his style by a contemporary writer in *The Edinburgh Review*, he says: "I looked through ——'s two volumes. He is, I see, an imitator of me. But I am a very unsafe model. My manner is, I think, and the world thinks, on the whole, a good one; but it is very near to a very bad

manner indeed, and those characteristics of my style which are most easily copied are the most questionable."

2. **Profuse Repetition.** — Of this characteristic, too, Macaulay was conscious; and not infrequently he manifested it with deliberate intention. Soon after the publication of the first two volumes of his *History*, in commenting on the criticisms made upon his work, he says: "Mr. Conybeare makes a criticism, in which Hannah seems to agree, that I sometimes repeat myself. I suspect there is truth in this. Yet it is very hard to know what to do. If an important principle is laid down only once, it is unnoticed or forgotten by dull readers, who are the majority. If it is inculcated in several places, quick-witted persons think that the writer harps too much on one string. Probably I have erred on the side of repetition." Not all his critics, however, agree with Macaulay in this self-condemnation. No less an authority than Taine exclaims: "It seems as if he were making a wager with his reader, and said to him: 'Be as absent in mind as you will, as stupid, as ignorant; in vain you will be ignorant, you shall learn. I will repeat the same idea in so many forms.'" As Taine here indicates, it is not repetition of stock-phrases, after the manner of Matthew Arnold, that we find in Macaulay, but rather a very skilful reiteration of the same idea in manifold forms. It is in large measure this characteristic which accounts for the famous story of the North country labourer who, after listening for several evenings, while a considerate employer had read Macaulay's *History* aloud to a group

of workmen, rose and moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Macaulay "for having written a history which working men can understand."

3. **Rapidity.** — That is, a habit of accumulating, in rapid succession, a series of propositions, all bearing on the same point, without stopping to expand or elucidate any of them. This characteristic is found especially in Macaulay's long oratorical periods. Like Burke, whom he resembles in other traits of style as well as this, he recognized the effective force of a cumulative paragraph. It is like the swinging of a sling several times about a boy's shoulders, in order to increase the momentum before he lets fly the stone. John Morley calls this trait of Macaulay "the music of a man everlastingly playing for us rapid solos on a silver trumpet." Sometimes, instead of giving cumulative force to an oratorical climax, the trait appears in the astounding accumulation of details which indicate the great breadth of the author's reading. As J. C. Morrison says, "He has weighted himself with a multitude of detail such as no historian ever uplifted before."

4. **Harsh Invective.** — Macaulay belongs to the bludgeon rather than the needle school of satirists. He strikes out boldly at his victim, and very seldom practises the finer graces of satire. His ridicule is broad and direct. Of his power in this respect he was also fully conscious. In the days of his parliamentary battles he not infrequently records with a chuckle his conscious intention to "hit hard." Sometimes, as in his essay on Barère, this trait is carried to such a brutal extreme as to defeat Macaulay's

intention by producing in the reader's mind a reaction in favour of his victim. In others of his essays the quality appears in slight degree. Of its manifestation in its extreme form, E. P. Whipple says, "He is both judge and executioner; condemns the prisoner; puts on the black cap with a stinging sneer; hangs, quarters, and scatters his limbs to the four winds — without any appearance of pity or remorse."

5. **The Sacrifice of Fact to Form and Effect.** — This is really a manifestation of the quality first named. It is simply such a case of fondness for making his sentence balance exactly that he understates or overstates the fact, and thus sacrifices accuracy to rhetorical form. Macaulay has won immortal fame in spite of this excess, not because of it. The strictures frequently made upon his accuracy as a historian generally refer to instances where he has sacrificed strict historical fact to the form of his sentences. As one critic has said, "In his judgement, men are all black or all white." In his search for paradoxes he was sometimes led out of the path of truth.

6. **Narrative and Dramatic Power.** — With the possible exception of his marvellous clearness, this is the quality, more than any other, which has given to Macaulay's works their remarkable hold upon the English-speaking world. It is here that his genius appears in the strongest light. He does not merely recite history; he paints history. Or, as Mrs. Oliphant more accurately puts it: "When we read Macaulay, we feel like a spectator of a great natural drama unrolling itself before our eyes. We are not even

hearing the story told by one of the actors, but actually looking on at what is taking place." Perhaps there is no finer illustration of this genius for narration than his famous portrayal of the siege of Londonderry. When he was preparing, with infinite diligence, to write the chapter containing this justly famous picture, he made this note in his journal, "I have a grand purple patch to sew on, and I must take time."

7. **Oratorical Climax.** — This rhetorical form, as might be expected, is found much more frequently in Macaulay's published speeches than in his more formal reviews or in his *History*. It is impossible for one to realize how great was his power over men through his spoken word, without reading at least that portion of his letters that pertains to the years of his activity in Parliament. While he used no notes, his speeches were most carefully prepared, and we are told that they "were repeated without the loss or omission of a single word." Indeed, it would have been impossible for Macaulay otherwise to have formed those "long, oratorical, climactic periods, consisting of a number of clauses in the same construction increasing gradually in strength so as to form a climax," which made him immortal for his eloquence. It was this quality which made his infrequent speeches in Parliament during his later years such memorable events. In this connexion we may be permitted to quote briefly from a newspaper description of such a scene: "Why, what's the matter? Matter? Macaulay is up. It was an announcement that one had not heard for years, and

the passing of the word had emptied the committee rooms as of old it emptied clubs. . . . The old voice, the old manner, and the old style — glorious speaking! Well prepared, carefully elaborated, confessedly essayish, but spoken with perfect art and consummate management; the grand conversation of a man of the world confiding his learning, his recollections, and his logic to a party of gentlemen, and just raising his voice enough to be heard through the room."

8. **Absolute Clearness.** — This is the crowning merit of Macaulay's style — his invariable perspicuity. And this, like his balance and his repetition, was a quality that he sought continually, sparing himself neither work nor pains. He repeatedly declared his estimate of the value of this prime quality of good English style. In a letter to the editor of *The Edinburgh Review*, who had taken exception to certain words used in an article contributed by Macaulay, he wrote: "The first rule of all writing — that rule to which every other is subordinate — is that the words used by the writer shall be such as most fully and precisely convey his meaning to the great body of his readers. All considerations about the purity and dignity of style ought to bend to this consideration. To write what is not understood in its whole force for fear of using some word which was unknown to Swift or Dryden, would be, I think, as absurd as to build an observatory like that at Oxford, from which it is impossible to observe, only for the purpose of exactly preserving the proportions of the Temple of the Winds at Athens." And while he was

engrossed upon his *History*, he made these reflections in his journal: "No doubt what I am writing will require much correction. . . . How little the all-important art of making meaning pellucid is studied now! Hardly any popular writer, except myself, thinks of it. Indeed, they may be right enough in one sense; for many readers give credit for profundity to whatever is obscure, and call all that is perspicuous shallow." And again: "Arrangement and transition are arts which I value much, but which I do not flatter myself that I have attained. . . . What labour it is to make a tolerable book, and how little readers know how much trouble the ordering of the parts has cost the writer!" Macaulay was also fastidiously particular about his punctuation, watching his printer with the most jealous care.

9. **Abundant Imagery.** — Macaulay's pages glitter with ornament. His wonderful memory enabled him to garnish his periods with a great abundance of illustrations, taken from the history and the literature of all peoples and times. He had what John Morley calls "a rapid eye for contrasts and analogies." In the judgement of some of his critics, he carried this tendency to excess. Professor Minto, for example, declares that "his prodigious knowledge of particulars betrays him into a superfluity of illustration. . . . Instance is piled upon instance and comparison upon comparison, where a full statement would be enough to make the meaning clear to the smallest capacity. The fluent abundance of comparison and example is often greater than the subject

demands." On the other hand, no less an authority than Gladstone praises Macaulay for his skill in applying this richness of ornament, saying: "From another pen such masses of ornament would be tawdry; with him they are only rich. . . . He embellishes the barrenest subject."

10. **Prejudice; Political Bias.** — The most zealous admirer of Macaulay must admit that, at times, he consciously or unconsciously allowed his statements to be warped by his political or other leanings. This can be considered as a quality of his style only when we take the term in its broad sense. With Macaulay, as with all really great writers, "the style *is* the man." This trait is akin to his sacrifice of fact to form, already discussed. In the phrase of one pungent critic, "Lord Macaulay was a great man, but he was a great Whig man." When this trait appears in those of his works that have not a political bearing, it is generally due to his disposition, already noted, to paint men as either all white or all black. In mitigation, it is fair to observe that he always erred on the side of what seemed to him to be the cause of liberty, justice, or sincerity.

11. **Self-complacency.** — Not a few of Macaulay's critics are disposed to apply to this quality the harsher names of conceit and egotism. If we treat his letters and his private journal, posthumously published, as fair evidence, it is very easy to establish the proposition that he was conceited; and his public writings sometimes lend colour to the charge. On the other hand, for every case of patent egotism one may easily find in his journal an

equally strong expression of self-depreciation and an unusually just view of the relative merit of his own work. Compare, for example, the two following paragraphs: "I feel that I am fast becoming master of my subject; at least, more master of it than any writer who has yet handled it. . . . Those poems have now been eight years published. They still sell, and seem still to give pleasure. I do not rate them high; but I do not remember that any better poetry has been published since. . . . I read my own writings during some hours, and was not ill-pleased, on the whole. Yet, alas! how short life and how long art! I feel as if I had just begun to understand how to write; and the probability is that I have very nearly done writing."

"I have never written a page of criticism on poetry or the fine arts which I would not burn if I had the power. . . . As compared with excellence, the work [his *History*] is a failure, but as compared with other similar books I cannot think so. . . . I read my book and Thucydides', which, I am sorry to say, I found much better than mine. . . . I find that the American publishers have thought it worth while to put forth two, if not three, editions of my reviews. . . . Now, I know that these pieces are full of faults, and that their popularity has been very far beyond their merit. . . . I have thought a good deal about republishing my articles [his reviews, now known as his essays] and have made up my mind not to do so. . . . I can truly say that I never read again the most popular passages of my works without

painfully feeling how far my execution has fallen short of the standard which is in my mind."

When we remember that Macaulay did not willingly give to the world in permanent form those brilliant essays which have now so long been accepted as English classics, and that he would never have republished them if he had not been compelled to do so by American book pirates, we must hesitate before accepting unconditionally the verdict that he was an egotist.

12. **Patriotism.** — This again is, of course, a personal rather than a purely literary quality. The love of liberty and the pride in his inheritance as a free-born Englishman appear in all his works. His nephew says: "It would be difficult to find anybody, whether great or small, who more heartily and more permanently enjoyed the consciousness of being an Englishman. Let those who may infer from Macaulay's vehemence against the abuses of the royal power that he was at heart a republican, read the letters that he wrote to an American friend, as found in the appendix to Trevelyan's volumes. The views which he there expresses as to popular government prove him to be, in fact, intensely conservative. One sentence will illustrate this: "I never wrote a line or uttered a word indicating an opinion that the supreme authority in a state ought to be entrusted to the majority of citizens told by the head; in other words, to the poorest and most ignorant of society. I have long been convinced that institutions purely democratic must sooner or later destroy liberty or civilization or both."

NOTES

The heavy marginal figures stand for page, and the lighter ones for line.

55 : 4. **Lichfield.** A town of seven thousand inhabitants, 115 miles northwest of London and almost in the exact geographical centre of England.

55 : 4. **Bookseller.** In England the selling and publishing of books often forms one business.

55 : 13. **Taking the oaths.** After the Revolution of 1688, which brought William and Mary to the throne, clergymen and office-holders were required to take an oath of allegiance to the government.

55 : 19. **Great muscular strength,** etc. This is a mild illustration of one of the most distinctive traits of Macaulay's style — his tendency to accumulate details in rapid succession.

56 : 6. **Were weak enough,** etc. Another of Macaulay's distinctive traits is the directness and openness of his derision. He never practises the indirect satire of Addison. He condemns or criticizes with the bluntest of adjectives.

56 : 6. **The royal touch.** Early belief in the divine character of royalty led to the belief that scrofula, called "king's evil," could be cured by a touch of the sovereign's hand.

56 : 16. **He lost for a time,** etc. This clause introduces a case of the most distinctive feature of Macaulay's style — his fondness for contrast. As Leslie Stephen says: "He likes to represent man as a bundle of contradictions, because it enables him to obtain startling results." He continually leads his reader to expect one result, only to give him a kind of electric shock by suddenly bring-

ing out the very opposite. Note this also in the sentence below beginning "Indolent as he was," etc.

56 : 24. **He ransacked,** etc. Note the accumulation of details.

56 : 24. Note the contrast here.

57 : 2 to 6, inclusive. Note the balance and the intentional surprise.

57 : 4. **Masters of Attic poetry.** The great poets who wrote in Attic Greek.

57 : 9. **Augustan delicacy.** Under the Roman emperor Augustus Latin literature reached its highest perfection, in the writings of Virgil, Horace, and Livy.

57 : 10. **Great public schools.** This term, in English literature, generally refers to such old endowed institutions as Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Winchester, and the like. In all, the study of Latin is given great prominence.

57 : 13. **Eton.** A great public school accommodating about one thousand pupils, established in 1440. It stands within sight of Windsor Castle, and has been attended by many of the royal princes.

57 : 16. **Petrarch's works.** Petrarch, perhaps the greatest Italian poet next to Dante, lived 1304–1374. His fame rests mainly on his sonnets.

57 : 19. **At least as much attention.** Macaulay's fondness for balance causes him often to sacrifice fact to form. That is, he will overstate or understate a case so as to make the sentence balance. It may be true, in this case, that Johnson *did* study modern copies as much as the original models; but such nicely balanced turns in Macaulay's prose are always to be scanned with some care as to the real facts.

57 : 22–26. Note the three cases of balance in four lines.

58 : 2. **A wealthy neighbour.** Andrew Corbet, a neighbouring gentleman, to whose son Johnson was, in return, to act as a companion.

58 : 4. **Pembroke College.** One of the numerous independent

colleges forming together the University of Oxford. It was founded in 1624, and was named after the Earl of Pembroke, who was Chancellor of the University at that time.

58 : 6. **Were amazed not more**, etc. Note not only the balance but the obverse iteration, another distinctive trait of Macaulay's style. That is, instead of telling his readers that a thing is so and so, he is fond of telling them that it is not the opposite. For example, we have here not only the longer illustration beginning "they were amazed not more," but the phrase "not unprofitable." Another writer would have said "desultory but profitable."

58 : 12. **Macrobius.** A celebrated Latin grammarian and rhetorician, who lived early in the fifth century A.D.

58 : 16. **He was poor**, etc. Johnson himself said that he was "miserably poor" and that he "meant to fight his way by his literature and wit."

58 : 19. **Quadrangle of Christ Church**, etc. Christ Church College at Oxford is large and fashionable. It was founded by Cardinal Wolsey under Henry VIII. In Johnson's time students were accustomed to regard with more or less contempt any youth from the middle classes, even if he were well dressed. So we can imagine their scorn of the ragged young man.

58 : 24. **No opulent gentleman commoner**, etc. A gentleman commoner was a student who paid for his board, and who was not, like a fellow, dependent on the endowment. He had also certain social privileges. This is probably a case of that extravagance of statement for which Macaulay is justly criticized. He is overfond of "broad, sweeping statements." Note, also, the obverse iteration.

58 : 28. **Now adorned with his effigy.** Besides his statue on this gate, the library of Pembroke has many memorials of Johnson.

59 : 1. Note not only the balance but the effective use of concrete words. No one knew better than Macaulay the value of the concrete. Compare the force of such a phrase as "tattered gown and dirty linen" with a synonymous general word, such as "poverty."

59 : 2. **In every mutiny,** etc. Obviously another exaggeration.

59 : 6. **Pope's Messiah.** A poem published by Pope in 1712, based on the Biblical narrative. It is perhaps the most artificial of Pope's works. It is an eclogue, and is written in imitation of Virgil's *Pollio*.

59 : 7. **Not exactly Virgilian.** This Latin verse was published by Johnson's father without the son's knowledge or consent. The son was much displeased, for he recognized the weakness of his work.

59 : 11. **The time,** etc. Three years in residence are required to secure a Bachelor's degree at Oxford. Johnson was in continuous residence only about fourteen months. After December 12, 1729, he was at Oxford very little. His name was on the books till October 8, 1731.

59 : 13. **Those promises.** One commentator asserts that the withdrawal of support was due to a quarrel between Johnson and his patron, Corbet.

59 : 26. **Aggravation.** Note not only the balance but Macaulay's accurate use of this much-abused word.

60 : 2. **Mad all his life.** Johnson was certainly a literary genius, and an eminent writer has held, with some show of reason, that all geniuses are more or less insane.

60 : 3. **Eccentricities less strange,** etc. Note the obverse iteration.

60 : 5–61 : 12. This justly famous passage strikingly illustrates several characteristics of Macaulay's style: his rapidity — that skill in accumulating details to which we referred in the note on 56 : 24; his power of seizing upon significant concrete details, and that power of personal portraiture which grows out of this. Suppose, for illustration, that Macaulay had simply said of Johnson here, that his table and society manners were peculiar or crude or offensive. Compare the effectiveness of such a general expression with that of this passage as it stands. Two other prominent traits are also

shown: first, Macaulay's habit of repeating the same idea in different words; second, his remarkable power of illuminating his pages with apt rhetorical figures. He had what John Morley calls "a rapid eye for contrasts and analogies." Reduce lines 16–22 on page 60 to literal, prosaic language, and note the loss of effect.

60 : 17. **His senses became,** etc. Note not only the immediate balance, but the cumulative surprise ending with the sentence, "But he was under," etc., to which he must add yet another balance beginning, "He was sick," etc.

61 : 1. **Afraid of death.** Leslie Stephen, Johnson's most generous biographer, says, "Fear of death and hell were prominent in his personal creed."

61 : 3. **The inevitable hour.** Did Macaulay unconsciously borrow this striking phrase from Gray's *Elegy*, written one hundred years before?

61 : 19. **Henry Hervey.** Third son of the first Earl of Bristol. Pope refers to his elder brother as Lord Fanny.

61 : 20. **Gilbert Walmesley,** called "the most able scholar and the finest gentleman in Lichfield." He often entertained Johnson and Garrick as boys.

61 : 21. **Registrar,** etc. That is, he was the clerk of the local ecclesiastical court, over which a bishop or his chancellor presided, which had jurisdiction in local ecclesiastical cases.

61 : 28. **Usher.** An under-teacher in an English public school — generally regarded with contempt. Recall the position of Nicholas Nickleby.

62 : 3. **Birmingham.** The chief manufacturing city of England. It is not far from Lichfield.

62 : 4. **Literary drudgery.** His work consisted in writing miscellaneous contributions for *The Birmingham Journal*, then published by a Mr. Warren, chief bookseller of the city and publisher of *The Journal*, who gave lodgings to Johnson in part payment for his contributions.

62 : 6. **A Latin book about Abyssinia.** This book by Father

Lobo, a Portuguese priest (1593–1678), was translated for Warren by Johnson, who received five guineas for the work.

62 : 7. **By subscription.** The practice of insuring the financial success of a book by securing subscriptions before it is written, so common in the eighteenth century, when literary patronage on the part of the great had begun to decline and before a large reading public had appeared, is still followed in the case of books calling for extensive research, especially those whose nature is such as to preclude a large popular demand.

62 : 7. **Politian.** A poet and scholar of Florence (1454–1494), who wrote poems in both Latin and Italian and was one of the restorers of learning.

62 : 13. **Children as old.** She had one daughter, Lucy.

62 : 14. **The lady appeared,** etc. Notice the effectiveness of the significant details in this and the two following lines. Some allowance must be made here, also, for Macaulay's exaggeration, which pervades the entire paragraph.

62 : 18. **Queensberrys and Lepels.** The names of two noble families prominent in the social life of the day. These are used as social types.

62 : 19. **Whose passions,** etc. Note the balance here and later in the paragraph.

62 : 25. **As poor as himself.** A patent exaggeration. Though not wealthy, Mrs. Porter brought to Johnson a dower of £800 ($4000), and this seems to have been his only source of support for many months after his marriage.

63 : 11. **Took a house.** It was in the village of Edial. His advertisement, soon afterward inserted in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, announced, "Young Gentlemen are boarded and taught the Greek and Latin languages by Samuel Johnson."

63 : 13. **Only three pupils.** A later and more accurate writer says that Johnson had eight pupils, all told.

63 : 16. **Tawdry, painted.** Note again Macaulay's broad derision. Like Milton, Burke, Carlyle, and Ruskin, he belongs to the

bludgeon school of satirists. Consider how much more delicately and skilfully an author like Addison or Thackeray would have referred to the lady's appearance.

63 : 18. **David Garrick.** In one sense Garrick (1716–1779) was the greatest actor England has produced. He excelled in both comedy and tragedy, and "did more than any other man to extend the popularity of Shakespeare."

63 : 25. **He set out,** etc. He had tried twice, but in vain, to secure a position in a public school. Garrick accompanied him on this first journey to London, but Johnson left his wife and stepdaughter in lodgings at Lichfield.

63 : 26. **Irene.** It is written in somewhat stilted blank verse, and, as Johnson afterward admitted, it was modelled too closely upon the old Greek dramas. It was Johnson's only dramatic work.

63 : 26. **Walmesley.** See note on 61 : 20.

63 : 29. **Never since literature,** etc. The inadequate rewards of Spenser and Swift prove that Macaulay somewhat exaggerates here.

64 : 5. **A pension.** From the time of Chaucer, it was customary for the sovereign to bestow pensions upon eminent literary men. Even Johnson, as Macaulay shows later on, received from King George III the sum of £300 annually during the last twenty-two years of his life.

64 : 5. **A sinecure place.** An office commanding a salary but requiring either no service or that which is merely nominal.

64 : 7. **A lord of the treasury.** The English Treasury Board consists of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and four lords of the treasury, of whom the first is usually the prime minister.

64 : 8. **A secretary of state.** There are five secretaries of state, belonging to the home, foreign, colonial, war, and Indian departments. Addison once held such an office.

64 : 9. **Several writers of the nineteenth century.** Sir Walter Scott received £15,000 for four of his novels; Thackeray received £4,000 for *The Newcomes*, and Byron received from Murray, the bookseller, a single payment of £15,455.

64 : 13. **Two ages of prosperity.** The Elizabethan age and the Victorian. Note the striking antithesis that follows.

64 : 17. **Pope.** Pope lived from 1688 to 1744. He was thus a contemporary of Johnson until Johnson was fifty-three years old. Pope therefore passed away before Johnson had attained any marked degree of literary success. He had not yet begun the Dictionary, and was known only as the author of the satire *London*. Macaulay might have included Scott, who lived like a lord till the bankruptcy of his publishers, with whom he was connected in business, ruined him.

64 : 22. **Thomson.** James Thomson (1700–1748), whose poem, *The Seasons*, published in 1730, gave him a wide and enduring reputation.

64 : 23. **Fielding.** Henry Fielding (1707–1754), the first great English novelist. He wrote *Pamela*, *Jonathan Wild*, *Amelia*, and his masterpiece, *Tom Jones*.

64 : 24. **Pasquin.** A dramatic satire published by Fielding in 1736.

64 : 25. **The Beggar's Opera.** A satire on the corrupt statesmen of the day, written in 1728 by John Gay.

64 : 26. **Tripe.** A cheap, coarse dish prepared from the stomach and entrails of animals. Note the effectiveness of this and the other significant details that follow. Suppose Macaulay had said, instead, that Johnson was forced to dine on coarse food in objectionable surroundings. Compare the force of the two kinds of expression.

65 : 13. **Hervey.** See note on 61 : 19.

65 : 21. **Drury Lane.** A small street near Covent Garden.

65 : 24–28. Note the balances and the effective use of specific terms, such as *coats*, *shirts*, etc.

66 : 5. **Alamode beefshops.** Beef *à la mode* is beef stewed with vegetables. Hence the term is used here to typify any cheap eating-house.

66 : 7. **A hare that had kept too long.** Note again the effective details as well as the broad satire.

66 : 12. **Would have broken,** etc. This antithesis, both in its form and in its Latinized diction, might easily pass for one of Johnson's own. And the same observation holds true of the following sentence.

66 : 18. **Was repeatedly provoked,** etc. Harley, second Earl of Oxford, in 1742 engaged Johnson to catalogue his library, treated him insolently, and was promptly knocked down by the impecunious librarian.

66 : 24. **The Harleian library.** A magnificent collection, founded by Robert Harley, first Earl of Oxford.

66 : 25. **About a year after,** etc. His tragedy, *Irene,* had meantime been refused by the two principal theatrical managers of the day.

66 : 28. **The Gentleman's Magazine.** Founded by Cave in 1731. This was the first use of the word *magazine* in this sense. *The Gentleman's Magazine* combined essays with news articles, and continued till 1868, when it became a magazine of light literature.

67 : 5. **It was not then safe.** Rigid penalties were provided to secure secrecy.

67 : 10. **Lilliput.** A name taken from Swift's famous satire, *Gulliver's Travels.* Lilliput there represents England in Swift's day.

67 : 10–14. **Belfuscu, . . . Mildendo, . . . sprugs, . . . Nardac, . . . Hurgo Hickrad, . . . Wingul Pulnub.** Newcastle was Prime Minister, Hardwicke was Lord Chancellor, and Pulteney was the leader of the Whigs.

67 : 17. **He had to find arguments.** That is, he made up the debates from imagination.

67 : 20. **His serious opinion was,** etc. Macaulay, who was almost as strong and biased a Whig as Johnson was a Tory, doubtless somewhat exaggerates the case here.

67 : 23. **Capulets against the Montagues.** The names of the rival houses in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet.*

67 : 25. **The Whigs.** From about the middle of the seventeenth century down almost to the present day, this term has been used to denote the more radical and progressive element in British politics, especially when that element, not being represented in the ministry of the day, has formed what is called "the opposition." The name was first applied to the adherents of the Protestant cause in Scotland, and is supposed to come from "Whiggamore," a horse-driver, because, in 1648, a company of men of that occupation marched to Edinburgh to oppose the royalist party who were fighting for Charles I.

67 : 26. **The dangers of the Church.** The Tories have always been, in theory at least, the supporters and defenders of the established English church. Johnson was an intense Tory, especially in his reverence for the religious establishment.

67 : 27. **Before he was three.** Perhaps not an exaggeration. Numerous cases of equal precocity are established.

68 : 2. **Sacheverell.** Dr. Henry Sacheverell (1672–1724), a famous high church preacher, who was impeached and suspended for three years by the Whigs under Queen Anne because he advocated passive obedience to the sovereign.

68 : 2. **Lichfield Cathedral.** One of the famous cathedrals of England, partly in the Early English style and elaborately ornamented.

68 : 4. **Staffordshire squire.** Lichfield is in Staffordshire. Note the force of the specific word *squire* and the striking antithesis in the next sentence.

68 : 11. **Tom Tempest.** A character in one of Johnson's *Idler* papers. He is a typical Jacobite, who gives expression to the wildest absurdities, declaring that William III burned the palace of Whitehall, etc.

68 : 11. **Charles II,** etc. That is, in the opinion of Johnson, they were two of the best kings, etc.

68 : 13. **Laud.** Archbishop of Canterbury, 1633–1645. He was one of the principal advisers of Charles I. Because of his evil

influence and his persecution of the Puritans, he was impeached and beheaded in 1645.

68 : 15. **Capacity of an old woman.** Macaulay's broad ridicule again. Johnson's pronounced admiration for Laud is a striking illustration of his extreme conservatism and Toryism.

68 : 17. **Hampden.** The great patriotic leader, who is chiefly known for refusing to pay an illegal tax imposed by Charles I. He made a test case of it and the jury decided against him, but the House of Lords ordered the judgement to be cancelled.

68 : 19. **The ship-money.** This was the illegal tax against which Hampden rebelled. It was a tax levied on the whole kingdom without the consent of Parliament. The returns were to be spent on the navy.

68 : 19. **Falkland.** Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland (1610–1643). Although a nobleman and a royalist by social position, he sympathized with the parliamentary party in the beginning of the struggle. In 1642, however, he sided with the Royalists, and was killed in the battle of Newbury in 1643.

68 : 20. **Clarendon.** Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, and afterward Lord Chancellor. His fame rests on his *History of the Great Rebellion*, a volume that gives an extreme Tory view of the struggle. By the marriage of his daughter to the Duke of York he became the grandfather of Queen Mary (wife of William III) and Queen Anne.

68 : 20. **Roundheads.** A contemptuous name given by the parliamentary party to the Puritans because the latter cut their locks short and held the long curls of the Cavaliers to be worldly and sinful. The term was also applied to the Independents.

68 : 28. **Those golden days.** For example, Defoe, as late as 1703, was sentenced to pay a fine of two hundred marks, to stand three days in the pillory, to be imprisoned during the Queen's pleasure, and to give security for his good behaviour during the succeeding seven years, all because he had published, in an anony-

mous pamphlet, the most indirect criticism of certain parliamentary acts in favour of high church proposals.

69 : 2–3. **Pilloried, mangled . . . whipped,** etc. Cases are on record where even these extreme punishments were inflicted on obscure pamphleteers who had attacked the reigning government.

69 : 4. **Dissenters.** The traditional name for those who do not accept and uphold the doctrines of the established church of England, especially those who connect themselves with some other form of religious worship.

69 : 5. **The excise.** An internal duty or tax, raised principally on foodstuffs, ale, spirits, and the like.

69 : 5. **Septennial parliaments.** In 1716 an act was passed limiting the existence of any particular Parliament to a period of seven years. This was done to prevent such an abuse of Parliament as had occurred under Charles I.

69 : 6. **An aversion to the Scotch.** He once declared that, if he should see both a Scotchman and an Englishman in danger of drowning, he would save the Englishman first. He admitted that he might save the Scotchman finally if circumstances permitted; but he added, "The dog should swim, Sir; the dog should sink!"

69 : 9. **The conduct of the nation.** The Scotch had given up Charles I to the parliamentary party, who beheaded him in 1649.

69 : 10. **Great Rebellion.** The name given generally by conservative Englishmen of Johnson's day to the English Revolution, which lasted from 1640–1651.

69 : 13. **Disordered by party spirit.** To those who know how frequently Macaulay allowed his own party bias to affect his writing, this implied stricture on Johnson is amusing.

69 : 26. **Juvenal.** The great Roman satirical poet. His odes, epistles, and satires represent the highest finish of Latin poetry. In his *London* Johnson imitated Juvenal's *Third Satire*.

70 : 1. **Pope's admirable imitations,** etc. His translation of the first satire of Horace's Book II, was published in 1733, and

gave rise to his famous and bitter quarrel with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

70 : 5. Note the successive antitheses.

70 : 10. **Johnson's London.** It consists of about three hundred lines, and is a pungent satire on the public men of the day. It is written in rhyming iambic couplets.

70 : 10. **Appeared . . . in May.** Pope's *Epilogues to the Satires*, written in defence of the government, appeared on the same day.

70 : 17. **Pope's own peculiar department.** He had established his reputation as the greatest satirical poet in the language since Butler.

70 : 18. **Pope . . . joined heartily,** etc. Such an attitude toward other literary men was so rare in Pope's career that it deserves especial notice here.

70 : 24. **An academical degree . . . a grammar school.** The degree was sought from Dublin University, and the school was at Appleby.

70 : 26. **Remained a bookseller's hack.** Macaulay does not mention the fact that, about this time, Johnson tried, unsuccessfully, to secure permission to practise as an advocate.

70 : 28 — 71 : 18. **It does not appear,** etc. Note the striking antitheses and the effective use of significant details in the second and third sentences.

71 : 6. **Boyse.** Samuel Boyse (1708–1749), a forgotten literary hack, almost unknown to-day except for this reference.

71 : 11. **Hoole.** John Hoole (1727–1803), called "the metaphysical tailor," because he had been educated by a tailor uncle. He translated Tasso and Ariosto.

71 : 14. **George Psalmanazar,** etc. The fictitious name of a literary impostor, who pretended to be a native of Formosa, and wrote an account of that island. He afterward devoted himself to the study of theology.

71 : 16. **Christian fathers.** The early commentators on the Bible, such as St. Augustine (429 A.D.).

71 : 20. **Richard Savage.** Savage claimed to be the illegitimate son of Anne, Countess of Macclesfield, and Johnson accepted the story. There is some evidence in support of his claim.

71 : 20—72 : 11. **An earl's son,** etc. Observe the striking force of Macaulay's rapidity here and of his use of specific terms in place of general.

71 : 22. **St. James's Square.** A fashionable quarter of London.

71 : 24. **Newgate.** A prison for felons, famous in literary annals. It has been repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt, and is still used for its original purpose.

72 : 9. **Covent Garden.** A square and general market-place in Bow Street, London, surrounded by a covered passage. It is still used for the sale of fruit, flowers, and vegetables. Near by is Covent Garden Theatre.

72 : 10. **Near . . . the furnace,** etc. Johnson himself knew what it was to pass a cold night thus.

72 : 22. **To drudge for Cave.** Johnson's first and principal work for this bookseller was a translation of Father Paul's *History*, for which he received £49, 7*s.* and which he never completed.

73 : 2. **Grub Street.** Since 1830 called Milton Street, Cripplegate, London. Johnson, in his Dictionary, defined it as "a place much inhabited by writers of small histories, dictionaries, and temporary poems." For more than two centuries the term *Grub Street* has been a synonym for ill-paid and unsuccessful authorship, both in England and in America. This use of the term seems to have grown out of the fact that, early in the seventeenth century, this neighbourhood was one where food and lodging were to be had at comparatively cheap rates; so that the starving crowd of literary hacks was attracted thither.

73 : 4. **Partial to the Latin element.** Macaulay here calls attention to one of the most distinctive traits of Johnson's style. He was excessively fond of what Lord Brougham called "long-tailed words in *osity* and *ation*." This tendency on the part of the great lexicographer has given us the word *Johnsonese*.

73 : 5. **No finer specimen.** Note the extreme language.

73 : 16. **Warburton.** Bishop Warburton (1698–1779), eminent as scholar, critic, and friend of Pope.

73 : 19. **A Dictionary.** Up to that time no dictionary of our language had appeared of such a character as to command universal respect. Johnson's Dictionary marked an epoch in the development of the English language. He practically established the spelling of modern English; for the orthography given by him to most words has been generally followed by later lexicographers. While this is very significant of Johnson's literary standing among his contemporaries, it is a most unfortunate fact for all people who now have occasion to spell English words. As Professor Lounsbury justly says: "Orthography was a matter about which Johnson was totally incompetent to decide. Yet, largely in consequence of the respect and even reverence still [1894] paid to that which he saw fit to employ, the spelling of English continues to be probably the most vicious to be found in any cultivated tongue that ever existed."

73 : 21. **Fifteen hundred guineas.** The exact sum was £1574, and he employed six amanuenses, but selected all the illustrations himself.

73 : 25. **Earl of Chesterfield.** Famous as an orator and a politician (1694–1773). His *Letters to his Son* were long accepted as a manual of conduct.

73 : 29. **A momentous conjuncture.** As Viceroy of Ireland in 1745, at the time of the Jacobite rising, Chesterfield refused to be frightened into the adoption of harsh coercive measures against the Roman Catholics.

74 : 2. **Secretary of State.** See note on 64 : 8.

74 : 5–11. Note the force of the specific words and the undisguised ridicule.

74 : 17. **Not till 1755,** etc. Meantime he had published, in 1745, a pamphlet consisting of certain criticisms on Hanmer's edition of Shakespeare, with proposals for a new edition by himself,

and, in 1747, the *Plan* of his Dictionary, which he inscribed to Lord Chesterfield.

74 : 18. **His huge volumes.** The Dictionary appeared in two folio volumes. This is the largest form of regularly printed books, and is now very rare.

74 : 24. **The Tenth Satire.** Juvenal, the great satirist who flourished under Trajan, wrote sixteen satires in heroic hexameter verse.

74 : 26. **Wolsey.** Thomas Wolsey (1471–1530), the great cardinal and statesman of the reign of Henry VIII. Compare Shakespeare's famous passage on the fall of Wolsey beginning, "Had I but served my God," etc., *Henry VIII*, iii. 2.

74 : 24—75 : 13. Observe with what skill Macaulay develops the surprise for the reader, which culminates in line 9, page 75, beginning with the words "On the other hand." This is what Minto calls "the rattling fireworks of Macaulay's style." Note, also, the effect of detail in this passage.

74 : 26. **The couplets.** These are as follows :

"In full-blown dignity see Wolsey stand,
Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand:
To him the church, the realm, their powers consign,
Through him the rays of regal bounty shine.

* * * * * *

"At length his sovereign frowns — the train of state
Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate.

* * * * * *

"With age, with cares, with maladies oppress'd,
He seeks the refuge of monastic rest.
Grief aids disease, remembered folly stings,
And his last sighs reproach the faith of kings."

Compare this with the passage quoted from Juvenal's *Tenth Satire* in the note on 74 : 24.

74 : 28. **The wonderful lines.** These lines, 56–80, of Juvenal's *Tenth Satire* are thus translated by Gifford :

"The statues, tumbled down,
Are dragged by hooting thousands through the town;
The brazen cars, torn rudely from the yoke,
And, with the blameless steeds, to shivers broke—
Then roar the flames! the sooty artist blows,
And all Sejanus in the furnace glows.

* * * * * *

"Crown all your doors with bay, triumphant bay!
Sacred to Jove, the milk-white victim slay,
For lo! where great Sejanus by the throng,
A joyful spectacle is dragged along."

74 : 29. **Sejanus**. Lucius Ælius Sejanus, minister of the Emperor Tiberius. After the withdrawal of Tiberius to Capri, in the year 26 A.D., Sejanus became the absolute master of Rome, and by means of his control over the Prætorian guards committed great excesses until his criminal career was cut short by assassination in the year 31 A.D.

75 : 9. **Hannibal.** The great general of the Carthaginians in the Second Punic War. He crossed the Alps and invaded Italy in 218 B.C.

75 : 10. **Charles.** Charles XII of Sweden, a famous general, 1697–1718.

75 : 19. **Goodman's Fields.** A London theatre, erected in 1729 and torn down in 1746. Garrick performed here some of his most successful plays.

75 : 22. **Drury Lane Theatre.** London's most famous playhouse, erected in 1663 on Russell Street, near Drury Lane. The Lane opens off the Strand.

76 : 1–17. Note the effect of the sharp balances and the significant details.

76 : 9. **The two Lichfield men.** Addison, Johnson, and Garrick were all educated, in part, at the Free Grammar School of Lichfield.

76 : 14. **Monkey-like impertinence.** Another specimen of Macaulay's indelicate satire.

76 : 15. **Bearish rudeness.** Because of his brusque manners, even toward intimate friends, Johnson came to be familiarly known as *Ursa Major* — "The Great Bear." His friend Goldsmith once declared, however, that he had "nothing of the bear about him but his skin."

76 : 17–21. Note the antitheses.

77 : 3. **Three hundred pounds.** Of this, £100 was in payment for his copyright.

77 : 8. **The Tatler.** A periodical founded in 1709 by Richard Steele. Each number consisted of one complete essay. During fifteen months, Addison wrote 41 papers, Steele and Addison together 34 papers, and Steele wrote a much larger number alone.

77 : 9. **The Spectator.** Founded by Steele, March 1, 1711, to succeed *The Tatler*, which it resembled. It continued till December 6, 1712. Of the 555 papers, Addison wrote 274.

77 : 13. **Other works.** Macaulay might have mentioned, with perhaps more relevance, some of the numerous journals founded by Defoe (1661–1731).

77 : 20. **The Rambler.** It was similar to *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* in aim, but was much heavier in form. Johnson never appears at greater disadvantage than when he attempts to touch a subject with Addison's delicacy. It is like an elephant trying to dance a hornpipe.

77 : 24. **Richardson.** Samuel Richardson (1689–1761), next to Fielding the greatest novelist of the eighteenth century. His novels, *Pamela*, *Clarissa Harlowe*, and *Sir Charles Grandison*, had a remarkable vogue.

77 : 26. **Young.** Edward Young (1684–1765), a poet who became famous in his day for his *Night Thoughts*.

77 : 26. **Hartley.** David Hartley, metaphysician and physiologist (1705–1757), known by his work, *Observations on Man*.

77 : 27. **Bubb Dodington.** George Bubb Dodington, afterward Lord Melcombe (1691–1762), satirized by Pope as Bubo. He wrote a diary which gives a vivid impression of the intrigues of the Whig party.

77 : 29. **Cannot be reckoned.** Note the effective use of the obverse iteration.

78 : 3. **Prince Frederic.** The oldest son of George II and father of George III. He became the leader of opposition against Walpole and the king.

78 : 5. **Leicester House.** The London residence of Prince Frederic during his quarrel with his father and with the Walpole government.

78 : 14. **The profits.** Johnson received two guineas a paper.

78 : 16. **Thirteen thousand copies.** The book consisted of one hundred and fifty numbers of *The Rambler*, and was reprinted ten times during Johnson's life. He seems to have received little, if any, share in the returns from the book.

78 : 25. **Too monotonous,** etc. The critics of the present age agree with Macaulay in condemning the "heaviness" of Johnson's style.

79 : 5. **A decision,** etc. Johnson himself really pronounced the decision, in a sentence that expressed the judgement of the literary world down to the time of Macaulay and Thackeray: "Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison."

79 : 6–11. **Sir Roger,** etc. Characters and events described in Addison's Essays.

79 : 13–16. **Squire Bluster,** etc. Characters and titles from Johnson's papers in *The Idler*.

79 : 18. **Mrs. Johnson,** etc. She died in 1752. Johnson wrote a sermon to be preached at her funeral, but it was not published till after his death.

79 : 23–27. Note the harsh satire in line 23 and the exaggeration in line 27.

79 : 27. **The Gunnings.** Two famous beauties of the time. Elizabeth became, successively, Duchess of Hamilton and of Argyll, and Maria, Countess of Coventry.

79 : 28. **Lady Mary.** Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762). Famous for her wit, her mental powers, her letters to Addison, and her quarrel with Pope.

79 : 29. **Than the voice of the pit of Drury Lane.** That is, than the popular verdict on his drama.

80 : 2. **The Monthly Review.** One of the two literary periodicals of the day. Johnson opposed its politics, but respected its editors' abilities.

80 : 9. **Three more laborious years.** Meantime Johnson contributed papers to *The Adventurer*, a periodical established by his friend and imitator, Hawkesworth.

80 : 12. **The eloquent . . . nobleman.** Lord Chesterfield.

80 : 14. **The value of such a compliment.** Johnson's influence was now so great as to be of no small political significance.

80 : 20. **The World.** A weekly periodical, 1753–1765. Walpole was a contributor.

80 : 27. **His decisions about . . . the spelling.** As already observed, this latter proposal was gradually adopted by general consent, though without formal ratification.

81 : 4. **In a letter.** This letter is so famous and so brief that we give it entire.

"To the Right Honourable the Earl of Chesterfield.

"*My Lord*, — I have been lately informed by the proprietor of *The World*, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to

favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

"When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre;* — that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

"Seven years, my Lord, have now passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before.

"The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

"Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the Public should consider me as owing that to a Patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

"Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I

should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

"My Lord,
"Your Lordship's most humble,
"Most obedient servant,
"SAM. JOHNSON."

81 : 11. **Horne Tooke.** The pseudonym of John Horne (1736–1812), famous as a politician and a philologist and also as the author of *Diversions of Purley*. He found errors in Johnson's etymological work.

81 : 28. **Was scarcely a Teutonic language.** Macaulay refers to the large percentage of words in Johnson's vocabulary derived from the Latin. Goldsmith once said to him: "Why, Dr. Johnson, if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like *whales*." While this criticism is sound as applied to *Rasselas* and to some of the *Rambler* papers, it does not hold true in Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. Minto has shown that, in that best part of Johnson's work, his percentage of classical derivatives is hardly larger than that found in Macaulay's vocabulary.

82 : 2. **Junius and Skinner.** Franziskus Junius, a German philologist (1589–1677), and Stephen Skinner, an English lexicographer (1623–1667). Skinner's etymological dictionary of the English language was published in 1671, after his death.

82 : 3. Note the balance.

82 : 10. **Spunging-houses.** Johnson defines it as "a house to which debtors are taken before commitment to prison, where bailiffs sponge upon them, or riot at their cost." Recall the scenes in Dickens's *Little Dorrit*.

82 : 12. **The man who had been formally saluted,** etc. Meantime Johnson had been publicly honoured in another way. He had visited Warton at Oxford late in 1754, and had received from Oxford the honourary degree of A.M. on February 20, 1755.

Although he had received from the publishers of the Dictionary £100 more than the £1500 promised, he was so poor that, in 1752, he was sued for a debt of £51, 3*s*, which was paid by a loan from Richardson.

82 : 21. **The Literary Magazine**, or *Universal Review*, established in 1756.

82 : 23. **Best thing that he ever wrote.** Macaulay's exaggeration. At least, the rest of the world has not placed this value on the paper.

82 : 25. **Jenyns's Inquiry.** Soame Jenyns, a miscellaneous writer (1784–1787).

82 : 27. **The Idler.** Johnson's profits on the collected edition, which appeared in October, 1761, were about £84.

83 : 13. **In a single week.** Johnson declared that he wrote it "in the evenings of one week."

83 : 14. **A hundred pounds.** From the first two editions Johnson received £1251.

83 : 17. **Rasselas.** The sub-title was, *Or, The Prince of Abyssinia.*

83 : 19. **Miss Lydia Languish.** A character in Sheridan's play *The Rivals.* She is devoted to novel-reading, and is exceedingly sentimental.

83 : 22. **The author's favourite theme.** Next to his sturdy independence, a certain morbid tendency to melancholy is the most distinctive trait in Johnson's character. He looked at all the world and at life through blue spectacles. This note, so often found, is typically expressed in this sentence from *Rasselas:* "Human life is everywhere a state in which much is to be endured and little to be enjoyed."

83 : 27. **The Monthly Review.** Founded in 1749 by Ralph Griffiths. Goldsmith was one of its contributors. It was one of the first of our strong critical reviews.

83 : 28. **The Critical Review.** Edited by Smollett. It was a Tory review, founded in 1756, to counteract the Whig influence of *The Monthly Review.* It existed till 1817.

84 : 3. **Without balancing every noun,** etc. It is amusing to find Macaulay indirectly criticizing Johnson for an excess of antithesis. While Johnson's balance may be more conspicuous in some of his works, and may be used with less skill than that of Macaulay, it would be easy to match, page for page, every antithesis of Johnson with one from Macaulay. Take, for example, Macaulay's line 7 on page 84. This is typically Johnsonian.

84 : 13. **The proprieties of time and place.** The ancient writers established certain very positive laws on this subject, which are generally referred to as "the unities." For example, the unity of time required that the events portrayed in a drama be such that they might naturally happen within one day; while the unity of place forbade the juxtaposition in a drama of events that would not naturally occur in the same place. Shakespeare was among the first to defy and continually to disregard these ancient laws.

84 : 21. **That law of gravitation.** Newton discovered this law about 1684. Johnson wrote *Rasselas* in 1759.

84 : 25. **Bruce's Travels.** James Bruce (1730–1794) travelled widely through Africa and published accounts of his travels.

84 : 26 — 85 : 18. Note the effect of the specific images, the balance, and the exaggeration.

85 : 1. **Burke.** The great statesman was deeply attached to the great lexicographer. See Macaulay's statement in line 21, page 109.

85 : 2. **Mrs. Lennox.** Mrs. Charlotte Ramsay Lennox (1720–1804), a poetess and novelist and a friend of Johnson. She wrote *The Female Quixote.*

85 : 2. **Mrs. Sheridan.** Mrs. Frances Sheridan (1724–1766), mother of the dramatist, Richard Brinsley Sheridan. She wrote *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Biddulph.*

85 : 14. **At Cairo.** Macaulay here refers to that peculiar seclusion in which the women of the Orient are kept, both before and after marriage. In many parts of Asia to this day the bridegroom never sees the full face of his bride till after their marriage.

85 : 16. **The poet who made.** Shakespeare is guilty of these anachronisms in *Troilus and Cressida*, ii. 2, and in *A Winter's Tale*, v. 2.

85 : 16. **Hector.** The Trojan hero in the siege of Troy.

85 : 16. **Aristotle.** The famous Greek philosopher, who died in 322 B.C., hundreds of years after the legendary date of the siege of Troy.

85 : 17. **Julio Romano.** Giulio Romano (1492–1546), a celebrated Italian painter, whose real name was Pippi. He thus lived 1500 years after the time when the oracle of Delphi flourished.

85 : 18. **The oracle of Delphi.** The oracle of Apollo, at Delphi in Phocis, Greece.

86 : 2. **Commissioners of excise.** Officers whose duty it was to impose and collect this tax.

86 : 5. **The Lord Privy Seal.** A cabinet minister who keeps and applies the privy seal to minor documents. It is also affixed to more important documents, together with the great seal. No act of Parliament becomes a law until the seal is affixed.

86 : 11. **George the Third.** He became king in 1760.

86 : 15. **The city was becoming mutinous.** London was as strongly Whig as Oxford was Tory, and was therefore displeased to see the Tories coming into power.

86 : 16. **Cavendishes and Bentincks.** Representative Whig families.

86 : 17. **Somersets and Wyndhams.** Representative Tory families.

86 : 17. **Kiss hands.** New ministers kissed the hand of the king on taking office.

86 : 18. **Lord Bute.** The Earl of Bute (1713–1792), a favourite and tool of George III. He was made prime minister in 1762.

86 : 19. **A Tory.** A member of the conservative party. The word is said to be derived from the Irish *tóruidhe*, a hunter, a chaser, and to have been applied by the English settlers in Ireland, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to the original possessors

of the soil, who, driven into the bogs and mountains, made incessant raids on their despoilers.

87 : 1–3. Note the effect of the specific words.

87 : 3. **The sheriff's officer.** That is, the officer who had so often attached Johnson's goods or his person to secure payment for debts. About this time Johnson declared to a friend, "No man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money."

87 : 5. **Large subscriptions.** His receipts for the first two editions of the Shakespeare were £475.

87 : 14. **The sacrament.** The sacrament of the Lord's Supper, then regarded in the Church of England with almost superstitious reverence.

88 : 1. **Cock Lane.** In 1762 a young girl living in Cock Lane, London, pretended to have communications from the other world.

88 : 8. **Churchill.** Charles Churchill (1731–1764), a famous wit and satirist of the day. Although a priest, he was an intimate friend of the dissolute Wilkes. He wrote *The Rosciad*, as bitter a satire as Pope's *Dunciad*.

88 : 11. **The Cock Lane Ghost.** Although Johnson really had aided in exposing the fraud, the incident became so famous as to make the phrase a synonym for imposture.

88 : 18–21. Note the balances.

88 : 25. **Polonius.** The officious old courtier, father of Ophelia in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. See the famous speech of Polonius in *Hamlet*, i. 3. 58, beginning, "And these few precepts in thy memory."

88 : 26. **Wilhelm Meister.** The title of a novel, Goethe's prose masterpiece, in which there is much acute criticism of Shakespeare.

88 : 28. Note the harshness of the invective.

89 : 1. **Play after play,** etc. While Johnson's edition of Shakespeare is of little value, it is obvious that Macaulay's passion for sweeping statement here carries him to an extreme.

89 : 4. **His Prospectus.** A pamphlet which he had issued nine

years before, when he at first proposed to edit Shakespeare and asked for preliminary subscriptions.

89 : 18. **Ben.** Ben Jonson (1574–1637). The greatest of the Elizabethan dramatists except Shakespeare. Note the effect of the use of his Christian name both to distinguish it from that of Samuel Johnson and to gain the vividness that comes from a concrete word.

89 : 25. **Æschylus** (died 456 B.C.), **Euripides** (died 406 B.C.), and **Sophocles** (died 406 B.C.) were the great dramatists and tragic poets of Greece.

90 : 1. **Massinger, Ford,** etc. Elizabethan dramatists.

90 : 11. **The Royal Academy.** An institution founded by George III, in 1769, for the cultivation of the arts. Its annual exhibition of painting and sculpture is still held in Burlington House, London. Johnson was made professor of ancient literature.

90 : 20. Note the balance.

90 : 21. **His conversation.** This was recorded in detail not only by Boswell but also by Mrs. Thrale and Madame D'Arblay.

91 : 8. Note the effective details.

92 : 2. **The trunk-maker and the pastry-cook.** These artisans used large quantities of paper in their callings ; and, as paper was then far more expensive than at present, it was customary for them to buy old books at a nominal price and tear them up to be used in separate sheets.

92 : 5. **Goldsmith.** Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774), the immortal author of *The Vicar of Wakefield.* He lived on terms of intimacy with Johnson, who often aided the improvident novelist with both money and good advice.

92 : 6. **Reynolds.** Sir Joshua Reynolds (1732–1792), one of the most famous English painters.

92 : 8. **Gibbon.** Edward Gibbon (1737–1794), whose *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* published in 1787, is one of the great historical masterpieces of the world's literature.

92 : 9. **Jones.** Sir William Jones (1746–1794), distinguished as a scholar, a jurist, and an Oriental linguist.

92 : 15. **Bennet Langton.** Langton succeeded Johnson as professor of ancient literature at the Royal Academy.

92 : 17. **Topham Beauclerk.** A descendant of Charles II. He was the son of Lord Sidney Beauclerk and grandson of the Duke of St. Albans.

92 : 27. **Johnson's Club.** It was also known as "The Turk's Head Club," because it met for a long time in the Turk's Head coffee-house.

93 : 4. **James Boswell.** Johnson first met Boswell in May, 1763, "and thus became visible to posterity."

93 : 6–28. **A coxcomb,** etc. Note the broad ridicule, the extravagant statement, the balance, and the graphic rhetorical imagery.

93 : 18. **Wilkes.** John Wilkes (1728–1797), a notorious demagogue of the day, editor of *The North Briton*, and a member of Parliament. Though frequently expelled from Parliament, Wilkes accomplished much toward securing the freedom of the press.

93 : 19. **The Bill of Rights Society.** An organization formed to aid Wilkes in his struggle with Parliament for constitutional rights.

93 : 21. **Whitefield.** George Whitefield (1714–1770), next to Wesley, the greatest of the Methodist revivalists.

93 : 22. **The Calvinistic Methodists.** As Wesley said, Whitefield "plunged into extravagant Calvinism," and so founded the sect here named.

93 : 29. **Was eternally catechizing,** etc. Take, for example, the following typical dialogue from Boswell's *Life of Johnson:*

Johnson. — "Nay, sir, it was not the wine that made your head ache, but the sense I put into it."

Boswell. — "What, sir; will sense make the head ache?"

Johnson. — "Yes, sir, when it is not used to it."

94 : 5–10. Note the effective use of "the art of surprise."

94 : 14. **The Parliament House of Edinburgh.** To this day,

the Scotch lawyers in their wigs may be seen on any day in the court season pacing the halls of this old building, deep in consultation with their clients.

95 : 1. **One of those clever,** etc. Note the planned surprise.

95 : 10–22. **Even the peculiarities,** etc. Note the effective detail and the balance.

95 : 23. **Southwark.** A borough of the city of London, on the south side of the Thames.

95 : 25–96 : 15. Note the rapidity, the balance, and the broad ridicule.

96 : 15. **Buck and Macaroni.** Slang phrases in use in Johnson's day. Nearly equivalent to our modern words *swell* and *dude.*

96 : 18. **Bath.** In Johnson's time Bath was the most popular watering-place in England.

96 : 18. **Brighton.** A modern English seaside resort.

96 : 21. **Fleet Street.** Johnson lived in Bolt Court, opening out of Fleet Street, from 1776 till his death.

96 : 21–26. Note the significant details.

97 : 1. **An old lady.** Miss Anna Williams, daughter of a learned Welsh physician, highly respected by Johnson. Leslie Stephen says that she was well educated and had some means of her own.

97 : 5. **Mrs. Desmoulins.** Widow of a writing-master and daughter of Johnson's god-father. Johnson gave her half a guinea a week.

97 : 10. **Levett.** Robert Levett, previously a waiter in a coffee-house. Johnson treated him as an equal, and wrote a poem on his death.

97 : 11–14. Note the striking effect of the specific words. Paraphrase the passage in general words, and see the loss of force.

97 : 21. **Mitre Tavern.** This famous hostelry stood in Fleet Street. It was a favourite meeting-place for Johnson and Boswell.

97 : 21–29. Note the intentional shock of surprise.

98 : 5. **The Hebrides.** The name applied to all the islands of

the western coast of Scotland. They are classified as the Outer and the Inner Hebrides.

98 : 13. **His love of the smoke,** etc. Pope, Johnson, and Lamb are the three English writers of high rank who preferred the town to the country. All three liked what Lamb called "the sweet security of streets."

98 : 17. **The Highland line.** The Highlands is the name given to the region north of and including the Grampian Mountains in Scotland.

98 : 27. **Journey to the Hebrides.** Johnson called the volume *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland.*

99 : 6. **His prejudice against the Scotch.** See note on **69** : 6.

99 : 12. **An Oxonian Tory.** For centuries Oxford University has been the educational centre of English conservative opinion.

99 : 12. **The Presbyterian polity.** The Presbyterian form of worship and church government is still, in a sense, established in Scotland, where, in Johnson's day, it was the state church.

99 : 15. **Berwickshire and East Lothian.** The soil of these districts is rocky and barren.

99 : 18. **Lord Mansfield.** William Murray (1705–1793), afterward Earl of Mansfield, the eminent Scotch jurist, who became Chief Justice of England in 1753. Noted for his speeches on the American Revolution.

99 : 26. **Five-shilling books.** A synonym for cheap and worthless literature.

100 : 3. **Macpherson, whose Fingal,** etc. James Macpherson (1736–1796) published in 1762 an epic poem in eight books, which he called *Fingal, or Relics of Ancient Celtic Literature.* He pretended that it was a translation from the Gælic of a Scotch poet of the third century. Johnson boldly declared it to be a forgery. It is now believed to be a collection of fragments that Macpherson had gathered in the Highlands.

100 : 16. **The more extraordinary.** Note the contrast.

100 : 27. **The Kenricks, Campbells,** etc. Scotchmen who

attacked Johnson in various ways. Dr. William Kenrick satirized his Shakespeare; Archibald Campbell, a purser in the navy, condemned his style; the Rev. Donald MacNicol attacked his *Journey to the Hebrides* in a scurrilous volume.

101 : 6. **Maxime**, etc. "I desire especially, if you wish, to contend with you."

101 : 10. **Not by what**, etc. See the effective antithesis.

101 : 12. **An author . . . is very unwise.** Oliver Wendell Holmes has pointedly expressed this truth in the epigram: "Controversy equalizes fools and wise men in the same way — *and the fools know it.*"

101 : 19. **Bentley.** Richard Bentley (1662–1742), master of Trinity College, Cambridge, was the great scholar of his day in England.

101 : 27. **Civil war was . . . impending.** This was in 1775.

102 : 4. **Two or three tracts.** One, entitled *The False Alarm*, had appeared in 1770.

102 : 7. **Almon and Stockdale.** Well-known London booksellers. John Almon was a friend of Wilkes.

102 : 8. **Taxation No Tyranny.** A pamphlet published in 1775. Its character may be fairly judged by the following sentence, in which Johnson refers to such men as Samuel Adams and John Hancock: "Probably in America, as in other places, the chiefs are incendiaries, that hope to rob in the tumults of a conflagration, and toss brands among a rabble passively combustible."

102 : 13. **The pleasantry**, etc. Note the characteristic ridicule and rhetorical imagery.

102 : 17–103 : 9. Note the intentional surprise, the antitheses, and the rapidity — the cumulation of distinct facts. This passage fairly illustrates another of Macaulay's distinctive traits — his fondness for oratorical climax. In some of his essays, and especially in his *History of England*, this quality appears much more frequently than in the essay under consideration.

103 : 7. **Sheridan.** Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816),

famous as a Whig politician and a dramatist. His *School for Scandal* has had a continuous popularity equalled only by the plays of Shakespeare.

103 : 9. **Wilson.** Richard Wilson (1714–1782), one of the founders of the Royal Academy. His specialty was landscape-painting, as that of Reynolds was portrait-painting.

103 : 14. **Though he had some scruples.** An evidence of his great reverence for the forms and festivals of the Church of England and of his general conservatism, to which reference has already been made.

103 : 18. **Cowley.** Abraham Cowley (1618–1667), called by Johnson "the best of the metaphysical poets." In his day he was considered superior to Milton.

104 : 1. **Button.** A coffee-house in Russell Street, Covent Garden, much frequented by Addison, Steele, Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot.

104 : 1. **Cibber, who had,** etc. Colley Cibber (1671–1715) was a prominent actor and dramatist, appointed poet laureate in 1730. He was a dictator in dramatic affairs, and made acting versions of *Richard III* and *King Lear*.

104 : 2. **Orrery.** The Earl of Orrery, a member of the Boyle family, who had published a work on Swift.

104 : 4. **Services of no very honourable kind.** Though Pope had aided Savage, he afterwards charged Savage with slandering him to Henley.

104 : 15. **The narratives are as entertaining,** etc. Somewhat exaggerated. Note the effective antitheses in this paragraph as a whole.

105 : 5. **The mannerism . . . was less perceptible,** etc. As already observed (see note on 81 : 28), his excessive fondness for a Latinized diction does not appear in the *Lives of the Poets*.

105 : 14. **Dryden.** John Dryden (1631–1700), the first great English poet after Milton and the first great critic of our literature. He died nine years before Johnson was born.

105 : 15. **Gray.** The poet Thomas Gray (1716–1771) was contemporary all his life with Johnson, though they do not appear ever to have met. Gray was so fastidious as to the perfection of his lines that he wrote very little ; but his *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* alone places him very high in our literary Pantheon.

105 : 19. **Malone.** Edmund Malone (1741–1812), a literary critic and Shakespearian scholar. He exposed the forgeries of Chatterton, and edited Boswell's *Life of Johnson.*

105 : 21. **Was very poorly remunerated.** Johnson received, altogether, four hundred guineas for the work, though he might have had three or four times as much if he had demanded it.

105 : 25. **Though he did not despise,** etc. Note the fine effect of the suspense, giving a form of balance.

106 : 4. **Robertson.** William Robertson (1721–1793), a Scottish historian, famous for his *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V.*

106 : 15. **Every year,** etc. Note the fine cumulative effect of this and the following sentences.

106 : 20. **The kind and generous Thrale was no more.** He died in 1781, after making Johnson his executor and leaving him £200.

106 : 21. **It would have been well if his wife,** etc. It is somewhat difficult to understand the severity of Macaulay's strictures upon the lady in this long paragraph. Commentators more recent and more moderate in their language do not sustain his views of Mrs. Thrale's actions ; and the whole passage is recognized as a flagrant case of Macaulay's bias and his excessive ridicule. Just why the lady's long kindness to Johnson should have precluded her from marrying again, and from marrying the man of her choice, Macaulay does not tell us. Neither are we told under what moral law Johnson was justified in thus anathematizing the woman who had done him so many kindnesses.

107 : 10. **A music-master from Brescia.** Gabriel Piozzi, an Italian musician of much talent.

107 : 17–108 : 3. Note the rapidity and its effectiveness.

107 : 24. **The Greek Testament.** Johnson, however ignorant of Teutonic literature, was widely read in ancient classics.

108 : 11. **An Italian fiddler.** Piozzi. This is a typical specimen of Macaulay's manner of heaping bald invective upon whomsoever and whatsoever he disapproved of.

108 : 14. **The Ephesian matron.** A character in the novel called *Satyricon*, written in the time of Nero by Petronius (Arbiter). He died about 66 A.D. This is almost the only extant novel of so early a date.

108 : 14. **The two pictures,** etc. See *Hamlet*, iii. 4. 53.

108 : 20. **Across Mount Cenis.** At that time this was the common route across the Alps from France into Italy.

108 : 21. **Concerts,** etc. Note the contemptuous effect of the specific words. As in all such cases, Macaulay shows great skill in using significant terms; and with equal skill he refrains from blurring the mental picture with irrelevant details or general terms. Any expansion in the sentence here would spoil its force.

108 : 22. **Milan.** The principal city in Lombardy and the chief commercial and financial centre in Italy. Its famous cathedral is the most ornate structure in Europe.

108 : 26. **That fine but gloomy paper.** The nature of this paper may be known from the following extract: "Manhood is led on from hope to hope and from project to project; . . . nor is it remembered how soon this mist of trifles must be scattered and the bubbles that float upon the rivulet of life be lost forever in the gulf of eternity."

108 : 29. **In a southern climate.** He had already visited Paris, with the Thrales, in 1775. Macaulay does not mention a second visit that Johnson made to Oxford in 1784, the last year of his life, in company with Boswell.

109 : 2. **His fear of the expense.** The remembrance of his early poverty naturally tended to make him penurious in his later years. At his death his estate amounted to £2300.

109 : 12. In this final characteristic passage we have again striking illustrations of Macaulay's favourite devices of rapidity and balance.

109 : 13. **The fatal water.** A reference to the disease of dropsy, which was the immediate cause of Johnson's death.

109 : 21. **Windham.** William Windham (1750–1810), a politician and parliamentary orator, a friend of Johnson, and a member of the Club.

109 : 24. **Frances Burney.** Now better known as Madame D'Arblay (1752–1840), the distinguished authoress of the novel *Evelina*.

110 : 6. **The propitiation,** etc. To a man of Johnson's conservative temper, the difficult questions with which modern theologians and other thinkers have surrounded this doctrine of the church seem never to have occurred.

110 : 8. **Westminster Abbey.** Founded by Edward the Confessor in 1065, and long since recognized as the English literary Pantheon. Burial within its sacred precincts is now universally regarded as the final public seal of literary greatness.

110 : 10. **Denham.** Sir John Denham (1615–1668), the author of *Cooper's Hill*.

110 : 11. **Congreve.** William Congreve (1670–1729), an eminent dramatist. He wrote *The Double Dealer*, *The Old Bachelor*, and *The Mourning Bride*.

110 : 11. **Prior.** Matthew Prior (1664–1721). Treated by Thackeray in his *English Humorists*. He was the author of the *City Mouse and Country Mouse*, a parody on Dryden's *Hind and Panther*.

110 : 12. **The popularity of his works,** etc. See how, beginning with line 12, Macaulay leads his reader to one conclusion, only to bring him up short with an antithetical conclusion at the end.

110 : 22. **The memory,** etc. The essay ends, as it began, with an intentional balance of phrase.

110 : 24–111 : 7. **The old philosopher,** etc. This final use of significant and specific terms and the closing touch of exaggeration make these lines very characteristic of Macaulay.

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